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CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS AS QUEEN DOWAGER

From a painting of the French School of the 16th Century in the Louvre

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS

BY

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VOLUME II

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CATHERINE DE MEDICIS

CHAPTER XXIII

THE THIRD CIVIL WAR

The war thus begun was longer and harder than the two former civil wars about religion. One of Catherine's most trusted councillors, the Bishop of Valence (brother of the famous general Monluc), wrote to her, "this war will be the most dangerous which ever was in this kingdom, because it is no longer a question between Catholics and Huguenots, for the Catholics themselves are divided and in part united with the Huguenots." He goes on to point out the plausible case which the Huguenots can make to such moderate Catholics, saying they had only taken arms to defend themselves and their religion, not against the King but against those who for their personal interests want to ruin the kingdom. He adds that four royal regiments had committed on the river Loire "so many execrable murders, so many robberies, violated so many women that the memory of such evil deeds will suffice to draw the anger of God upon all those of the Catholic party. . . . If the King shall be resolved to make war (which will be certainly to the regret of many well thinking people) I beg him to take means to wage it with diligence and take means for the relief of his poor people." [1]

But the King was unable to wage war quickly. The Huguenots were the first in the field and the royal army could not assemble rapidly. Six regiments of regular troops of the line were quickly brought together, but the gendarmes, or regular cavalry, lived in their houses, took care of their own arms and horses and could not be mustered at a moment's notice. It was difficult for the King to raise

[1] Record Office, State Papers, France, pntd de la Ferriere (3), 220.

his force of mercenaries in Germany, because most of the German princes favored the Huguenots. The consequence was that, within less than a month of their arrival at La Rochelle, the Huguenot leaders forced the surrender of the important city of Angoulême with a garrison of twelve hundred men, and ten days later formed a junction with the men of Dauphiny and Provence, seventeen thousand strong, who had made the long march up from the south through the midst of the royal troops. Early in November the Huguenots were able to face with twenty-five thousand men a royal army which was not over eighteen thousand. But after a campaign in which they had not been able to make any decisive use of their superior forces, both armies, suffering from hunger, disease, the intense cold and desertion, went into winter quarters about fifteen miles from each other, in the beginning of January, 1569.

During these four months of the close of 1568 Catherine had not been idle. She had not indeed visited the camp, as in previous wars, nor had she made any attempt to advise about military operations. In Tavannes she had found the most skilful leader for the Crown since the assassination of the Duke of Guise, and, though there was still ill feeling among the great men in the army, it did not reach such a pitch of intensity that it completely lamed military operations as it had in the previous war. Catherine devoted herself to the problems of finance and diplomacy. It was chiefly the lack of money which made the King so slow in getting ready to fight. Paris, which had been asked for a loan and a grant, responded with hesitation, because the Parisians said that when the money had once been collected peace would immediately be made with the Huguenots. Catherine therefore tried to get money in Italy. The three places where she could hope to get most were Venice, Florence and Rome. The Pope finally granted her the right to sell a large amount of ecclesiastical property. Venice and Florence demanded security for their loans. Catherine ordered the royal jewel casket opened before the

Venetian Ambassador, showed him two big diamonds, a heart made of diamonds with great stones hung from it, together with many unset rubies of various sizes, and asked which he wanted as pledge. She finally gave him three jewels bought by Francis I, which were considered the three best jewels of the crown. The Duke of Florence, perhaps because he heard that the choice of pawns had been given to Venice, grew discontented with what had been assigned to him as security and suddenly refused to send the money. Catherine became exceedingly angry and wrote him a very curt letter. She cooled down after a time, wrote soothing letters and said that if he was not content with the pledge she had picked herself for him, she would give a mortgage on the whole of the inheritance of Cosimo which she claimed in Italy. But this property, which was involved in an apparently endless lawsuit, did not seem a very negotiable security and in spite of all Catherine's efforts the poverty of the King remained one of the chief difficulties in waging the war.[1]

The diplomatic problem was as difficult as the financial problem. Many of the German princes shared Elizabeth's suspicion that there was an understanding between Spain, France and the Pope to destroy the Protestants throughout the world, and they might at any time become ready to enter into the counter-league at which she had plainly hinted. To the strong letter Catherine wrote her and the even stronger message which the French Ambassador was directed to deliver to her—

"'Language so plain that she did not think it worthy of her pen to rewrite it'—Elizabeth replied very sharply, that she did not blame the Bishop for having so well repeated his lesson, 'not that I believe that the King or you were his teacher, but I am not ignorant, madam, if you please, from what shop such drugs come. People talk of me often like hunters who divide the skin of the wolf before they have him. . . . But I am not so reckless that the security of my government puts me so much to sleep

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 266, f. 270, f. 284; Arch. Med. 4745.

that I do not make provision in advance for any accident which can wake me up. I am not of those people who open their mouth and wait for God to send them something to eat. Yet God forbid that I should not use the good means which God has given me, to prevent and prepare for my troubles, which is what I hope that you yourself, as my very good sister, would wish me to do.' "

This was, however, little more than high talk on Elizabeth's part. She had no intention of openly supporting the Huguenots as she had previously done; still less of putting herself openly at the head of any general league of Protestants. She did secretly send help to the Huguenots in the shape of artillery and ammunition and finally loaned them money, but she gave Catherine pacifying assurances informing her that she would never "maintain any subject in rebellion against his sovereign." [1]

If a report of the Ferrarese Ambassador, for which I have been unable to find any confirmation, is true, this apparent change of attitude in Elizabeth may have been due to a bold action of Catherine. He reports, at the time when the two queens were exchanging these sharp words, that he had heard "from a person whom I consider worthy of belief, that the Queen of France, being afraid that the Queen of England would favor the Prince of Condé, had written a package of letters to certain noblemen of that kingdom to rise against her, which letters had been captured, together with a letter to the Cardinal of Lorraine, on account of which the Queen of England remained very indignant. But everybody who knows about the affair blames the Cardinal of Lorraine for managing the business so badly." [2]

Elizabeth was perfectly right in supposing that the Cardinal of Lorraine was now the chief influence at the French Court and Condé was right in charging that he had the backing and friendship of the King of Spain; though

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 282, 306, 1727, f. 3; Letts. III, 228, Cal. F. Oct. 5, pntd. French; Letts. III, 185, Cal. F. 558, 560, 566.
[2] Arch. Mod. England, n. d. Circa Sept. 1568.

both of them were in error in supposing that the confidence which either Catherine or Spain reposed in him was absolute. The Spanish Ambassador wrote to his master, "Lorraine is a man that you can do nothing with unless you show your teeth," and once when Catherine noticed that the Cardinal, under pretence of talking to one of the secretaries, was really listening to what she and the Spanish Ambassador were saying, she laughed, nodded towards him and changed the subject.[1] Nevertheless the influence of Lorraine was so great that he succeeded in driving from Catherine's service the ablest and perhaps up to this point, the most trusted of all her servants in certain respects, the Chancellor de l'Hospital. He was desperately hated by the whole Guise faction and all the extreme Catholics, but his wisdom and experience gave him great influence with all their opponents whether Huguenots or Politiques.

When the papal bulls permitting the King to sell a hundred thousand pounds a year's worth of the Church land (rent) were issued together with the royal edict, the Chancellor refused to put the seal upon them, and, in the privy council, the Cardinal of Lorraine asked why he refused. The Chancellor asserted the privileges of the Gallican Church and said the King had the right in time of need to close all the churches and use the income without permission from the Pope. In addition the condition on which the bull was granted, that the Edict of Pacification must be revoked, was a move to bring the Germans into the realm.

"The Cardinal of Lorraine answered that it was not the first time he had shown himself a hypocrite and an enemy to the Pope. He was not astonished for the Chancellor was 'an atheist, his wife was a Calvinist, and his daughter was a harlot.' The Chancellor replied that he had as honest a family as he, thereupon the Cardinal gave him the lie and springing from his chair started to take him by the beard. Marshal Montmorency stepped between and the Cardinal said that if it hadn't been for the presence of the Queen Mother those would have been the last

[1] A. N. K. 1511 f. 118.

words he had ever spoken. The Cardinal of Guise and the Duke of Longueville also showed much excitement, all hurling insults at the Chancellor. The Cardinal, addressing the Queen, said the Chancellor was the only cause of the troubles in the realm and if the Parlement could only get hold of him, his head would not stay on his shoulders twenty-four hours. The Chancellor replied that the Cardinal was the cause of all the mischief that had happened to France within these eight years as well as to all Christendom."

The Queen Mother had the Chancellor escorted to his room at the conclusion of the council by her guards, for fear that some violence might be done to him, and making a virtue of necessity he begged the Queen to relieve him of the burden of his charge, saying that he was already too old and unwell to be fit for work.[1] In his will he explained his retirement as follows: "When I saw that what I did was not pleasing either to the King or the Queen and that the King was so circumscribed that he neither could have his own way nor even dare to express what he himself thought, I considered it better not to wage a hopeless fight but to yield the state to new rulers." He did this with sorrow in his heart. His enemies who drove him too far had done it under pretext of religion, but their real reason was, that, "so long as he was in office, they could never violate the royal edicts nor plunder the treasury."

L'Hospital was by the judgment of a nuncio "the most skilful minister for financial reforms that had ever been in this kingdom and entirely honest." France needed a man like him to save the state from the worst kind of plunder, but nevertheless he was wrong in his judgment about the chief motive of those who procured his dismissal. For several years Spain and the Pope had done everything in their power directly and indirectly to have him driven from office. The cause of his fall was that he so boldly opposed their plan of suppressing the Huguenots by force. The seal was put in commission and he exercised no more in-

[1] Cal. F. 1568, p. 554; B. N. It. 1726 f. 274, 276; Brant. III, 321.

fluence in the government, but it was four years and a half before he was asked for his resignation. He gave it in a beautiful letter to the King:

"The Queen your mother has told me of your will and hers and I yield to it not simply out of my duty but gladly and frankly. . . . I have always followed the broad King's highroad without turning to right or to left, nor joining myself to any private faction and now that age and illness make me useless for your service, I pray God to guide you by His hand in all your affairs and in governing this great kingdom with all gentleness and clemency towards your good subjects; in imitation of Him who is good and patient to bear our offenses and quick to pardon our faults." [1]

The reason why Catherine now suppressed her hatred of the Cardinal of Lorraine and worked with him was, that in this civil war, unlike the two previous ones, she was not in favor of making peace but resolute to push matters to a definite conclusion. By the beginning of the year 1569 the rest of the royal council was willing to discuss terms of peace, and therefore Catherine could find no sure support in carrying out her policy of war except the Cardinal of Lorraine and his followers.[2]

But one of her diplomatic negotiations she did her best to conceal from him. It seemed to her the most important of all because it concerned the marriage of her children; which always occupied the first place in her mind. The predictions of the celebrated soothsayer Nostradamus had been published a short time before. He prophesied that the House of Valois would shortly be extinct. Long before, Catherine knew of another prophecy of his that she would live to see her three sons crowned. Both these predictions were fulfilled and the first of the long series of sorrows which confirmed them now came to Catherine. Her daughter, the Queen of Spain, died in childbirth on the 23rd of October, 1568. Catherine was very fond of Elizabeth and

[1] L'Hospital, II, 509; Arch. Vat. Francia, 25 Jan. 1574; A. N. K. 1503 f. 36 Hyp. 15 June, 1562; B. N. fds. fr. 3956 f. 253.
[2] Cal. F. 1568, p. 554; B. N. It. 1726 f. 274, 276; Brant. III, 321.

came nearer to making a confidant of her than any person to whom she ever wrote. Although "she tried to hide her grief, it appeared days afterwards in her voice and face." She wrote to her son-in-law, "My grief is so great that without the help of God I do not think that it would be possible for me to carry the sorrow and weariness which I feel, but, knowing that it is He who gave her to me and set her for the consolation of my age in the place where she was next to Your Majesty, I must acknowledge that He could take her away when it pleased Him and if, for my sins, He has willed to leave me in the world after her, I must conform myself to His will and submit to it in patience." She carried over her affection to her two little grand-children. Until the end of her life she wrote continually to their father and to others expressing anxiety about their care and happiness. She sent them dolls and puppies, stopped a royal courier until he could carry them presents from the fair at St. Germain, and in the last year of her life a special ambassador knew he would please her by a letter explaining how, before delivering the clocks she had sent to her grandchildren, he "had tied them up into a pretty package with a white ribbon." When Philip married again she wrote to the new wife warm thanks for kindness to her grandchildren.[1]

It was just this clear perception that Philip would soon take another wife which made Catherine enter into a delicate intrigue she vainly tried to keep extremely secret. She had been very anxious to marry her son the King to the oldest daughter of the Emperor of Germany. Just before her daughter's death she had been delighted to receive a letter from her ambassador in Spain telling her that the King of Spain, whose influence with his cousin in arranging this match would be very great, was so favorable to it that it was to be expected that it would be soon accomplished.

[1] First Edition, 1566. Le Pelletier, I, 77, Cal. F. 1561-1562, p. 323; B. N. It. 1726 f. 285-287. Letts. III, 276, e.g. Letts. III, 204, 207, 215, 219; IV, 26; IX, 375; X, 464; Mousset, 47.

Within about a month of the death of her daughter, she wrote to her ambassador at Madrid and said she wanted to see her youngest daughter Margaret married to the widower; not that such a match would cure her grief

". . . because for as many sorrows as I have, death is the best remedy I could find, but for the good of his kingdom to which I owe so much and the preservation of peace between these two kingdoms. If then the King of France were married to the oldest daughter of the Emperor and the second daughter of the Emperor were married to the King of Portugal, it would be the best possible guaranty of perpetual peace." She begged him to suggest this to the King of Spain "without talking to him about my daughter unless you can do it so dexterously that he has no idea that I know anything about the proposal. Take pains also to gain for this proposal the King's confessor, pointing out to him the evil which it would be for Christendom if any disturbance of the amity between these two kingdoms should arise. . . . The King is sending the Cardinal of Guise to carry his condolences to King Philip on the death of his wife. Don't say a word to Guise of what I am now talking to you about, even if he should speak to you about it, and burn this letter and reply to it by the same messenger who carries it in a letter apart from your regular dispatches."

At the same time she wrote a regular official letter to the Ambassador bidding him show the Cardinal of Guise every possible attention and "give him all the information which you think may aid him in his negotiations." [1]

All this secrecy was of little use, because, at the very time this letter was written, the Spanish Ambassador was writing to Philip about the Queen's desire to have him marry her daughter Margaret; although he was under the mistaken impression that she was doing it with the counsel of the Cardinal of Lorraine, from whom Catherine concealed her plan. This negotiation came to nothing, and the French Ambassador at last lost his patience and wrote in the beginning of 1569: "I tell you clearly what I think; it is my opinion that there is nothing in these people here except

[1] Letts. III, 189, 205, 210.

bad will. . . . They reckon that your civil war keeps them at peace and the impoverishment of your kingdom in men and in money is the strengthening of theirs."

The suggestion of this moderate Catholic, that France was being rapidly impoverished by the civil war, was only too true, for it was even more cruel and wasteful than the wars about religion which had preceded it. On the Huguenot side, it is easy to assemble a catalogue of evil deeds which justify the saying of their captain, de la Noue, which became proverbial among them. "We fought the first war like angels, the second like men and the third like devils." At the storming of Châteauneuf, they slaughtered priests and women. After the surrender of Angoulême priests were killed. At the surrender of Pons, in spite of the terms of capitulation, four hundred soldiers were slaughtered. In the neighborhood of Bourges they killed a large part of the priests who fell into their hands and burned the churches and parsonages. At the surprise of Lignières they massacred the garrison, pillaged the town and ravaged the churches, opening the tombs to melt down the lead of the coffins for balls. They closed the savage scene by killing a priest and throwing him into the river. After the storming of Aurillac, they tortured and hung the consuls and put four hundred people to death. The garrison of La Charité took an abbey and compelled the monks to hang each other. The Vice-Admiral of the Huguenot privateer fleet, whose base was La Rochelle, captured at the Island of Madeira a fleet of seven Portuguese ships on its way to Brazil. The fleet was carrying sixty-nine Jesuits on a mission to the New World. The Huguenots took the plunder of the fleet, and released their prisoners, except forty of the Jesuits, whom they slaughtered and threw into the sea.[1]

In short, they justified the regretful judgment of Beza,

[1] Letts. III, 222 N.; d'Aubigné, III, 390 qtd. V. Ch. 20, Ch. 5; Gigon, 405; Brimont, I, 443, 446, 456, ctd.; Imberdis, I, 75-79; B. N. It. 1727 f. 68, La Pop., III, 194.

their intellectual leader since the death of Calvin in 1564, "Certainly the defense by arms was just and necessary, but the arms were so badly used that there is need to pray God either that He will never force us to take them again or that He will teach us to handle them in a more holy manner. . . . May His Church be rather an assembly of martyrs than a refuge for murderers and brigands." Where the Huguenots acted in direct reprisal as in Béarn, their vengeance was fierce. At the storming of Tarbes nine hundred soldiers or inhabitants were put to the sword and the city was almost entirely burnt and "just as she rejoiced in the sack, poverty, distress and fears of Béarn and had grown rich on her plunder, she was herself miserably sacked and bathed in her own blood by the Béarnois." At the storming of Auxerre there was more of a massacre than a fight and the slaughter of the inhabitants was "quasi-universal." A great part of the garrison took refuge in the château which they were finally compelled to surrender on the distinct condition that their lives should all be spared. But a week later nine captains and soldiers were killed in cold blood in prison: "a violation of faith which, although some of those who suffered by it had previously broken their own word, was blamed by many as contrary to the word of God and an imitation of those who claim that faith ought not to be kept with heretics." [1]

It is easy to more than match these savage deeds on the Roman Catholic side. Soon after the beginning of the war the mob of Auxerre killed a hundred and fifty Huguenots, stripped their bodies, dragged them through the streets and threw them into the river or into the sewers: "a cruelty so extreme that even the very papists abhor to hear the same." The Catholic mob of Orleans attacked the city hall where there were more than two hundred Huguenots confined, set fire to it and burnt it with more than one hundred of the prisoners. At the storming of the château of Saillans the soldiers dragged the Marquis from his sick bed and

[1] Qtd. Picard 38 Bull. Soc. Prot. 41, p. 156; Bordenave, 269, 283, 303.

threw him into an oven. After the storming of Nay some of the inhabitants were slaughtered in the streets and others, who were allowed to escape through the gate, were massacred by the peasants of the neighborhood. When a breach had been opened in the walls of Rabastens, the garrison retired to the château which was immediately stormed. The captain with some of his men was thrown from the highest tower and everybody in the château, women as well as men, was put to death. At Pau the governor hung ten Huguenots without giving them a hearing. Drums and fifes played gay airs during the executions. At Lesca as soon as the Roman Catholic general had entered the city, he hung five ministers and had their dead bodies thrown into the river. The Huguenots were apt to kill the priests, and the Roman Catholics rarely spared the lives of ministers who fell into their hands. At the storming of Sancerre all the Huguenots were put to the sword. "An old minister disguised like a young man in a velvet suit with gold trimmings was brought before the commander, Sansac, who was one of the high officers of the army asked for him saying he wanted to send him to preach in his country. His request was granted and Sansac immediately had him cut into a thousand pieces." [1]

It is difficult to read the details of these civil wars in any impartial spirit without assenting heartily to the remark of Elizabeth to the Huguenot refugee, Cardinal Châtillon, that "although the religion of both of them thought it was a great abomination to go to mass, she would rather have heard a thousand masses than to have been the cause of the least of a million wicked deeds committed in these troubles." [2]

Sometimes the commanders attempted to stop these acts of treachery and cruelty, as when the Duke of Aumale tried to prevent his men from killing soldiers of a garrison

[1] Challé, 235, 237, Cal. F. 1568, p. 569; B. N. It. 1726 f. 68, 284. Imberdis, I, 77; Bordenave, 203, 222, 263, 308; at Lazerte, 170 Ecclesiastics killed; de Thou, 319, 320.

[2] La Mothe, II, 398.

that had been granted the right by the surrender to march out with the honors of war, or Biron cut down with his own hands a soldier who dishonored the King by exhorting his fellows to break the terms of surrender and kill a surrendered garrison. The Huguenot captain d'Aubigné bitterly regretted, on what he thought was his death-bed, that he had not been able to punish one of his soldiers who had killed an old peasant without any cause. Many commanders, however, made no special effort to prevent cruelty or treachery; some, like Monluc, encouraged it as a matter of general policy. Even the Admiral could execute savage reprisals. After the disastrous battle of Mensignac the peasants had slaughtered many of the scattered Huguenot fugitives. When Coligny afterwards passed through the district with his army, "after keeping 260 in the great hall of a château he had them all killed in cold blood" and answered Brantôme's remonstrance that he was killing the innocent with the guilty, "that it made no difference: they were all peasants of Périgord." [1]

When the main campaign was resumed at the end of the winter, the royal army had about twenty-four thousand men to the Huguenots' seventeen thousand, and the King's troops took their turn in trying to force a general and decisive engagement. On the 13th of March, 1569, Tavannes caught the insurgents in a very unfavorable position near the village of Jarnac. They succeeded in disengaging themselves with the loss of only four hundred men, but in the sharp rear guard action the Prince of Condé was wounded and dismounted. Someone rode up after the battle was over and shot him in the back with a pistol. There is not sufficient evidence for the generally accepted story that he was shot by the captain of the Duke of Anjou's guard by the express order of his master, who rewarded him with a large sum of money for the murder. Anjou hated Condé because the Prince had claimed the lieutenant-gen-

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 606; d'Aubigné, III, 142; d'Aubigné (2), 21; Brant. VI, 18, 19.

eralship after the death of King Anthony of Navarre, his older brother, and though there is no proof that he murdered his rival, the heir to the throne was so lacking in chivalry as to allow his body to be carried slung across a donkey and then dumped in the public street opposite his own lodging. It was two days before he would hand it over to the Duke of Longueville, Condé's brother-in-law, for burial.[1]

The death of Condé did not weaken the Huguenot party very much. Although all of his friends and even many of his opponents regretted the debonair prince, his death simply transferred all military authority to the more influential and abler Admiral. In order, however, to maintain the idea that the Huguenots were not in rebellion, but contending for their constitutional rights, the nominal command was given to Henry of Condé and Henry, King of Navarre, two lads sixteen and seventeen years old. The gay hearted meridionals, who made up the largest part of the Huguenot army, could not long remain depressed even by the loss of a leader they loved. Some camp fire poet composed the following song:

"Le Prince de Condé
Il a été tué
Mais monsieur l'Amiral
Est encore à cheval
Avec la Rochefoucauld
Pour chasser les papaux-papaux-papaux."

It was set to a rattling refrain which for months was played on the trumpets of the Huguenot cavalry whenever they thought that there were any Roman Catholics near to enjoy it.[2]

The Huguenot civil wars were fought in the field of literature as well as on the field of battle and in the first field the Huguenots showed a very marked and surprising superiority, whether in stately proclamations, gravely

[1] D'Aubigné, III, 54, d'Aumale.
[2] Brant. IV, 356.

reasoned pamphlets, mordant satires or in numerous productions running all the way through playful mockery to plain vituperation. The old royalist fighter Monluc twice wrote impatiently in his memoirs, "We beat them in arms but they beat us by those diables d'écritures." [1] It is difficult to account for this superior skill of the Huguenot pens unless it be a general law that the more inactive minds in any generation tend, on the whole, to stand by things or thoughts as they have been. This tendency, if it exists, would be strengthened in the case of the struggle of the sixteenth century by the relations of Protestantism to Humanism. The young humanists who embraced Lutheranism or Calvinism were able from the start to make the new learning efficient in putting fresh energy into methods of education. On the orthodox side this was done more slowly. The new order of the Jesuits, who finally adopted the New Learning and turned the rising tide of Protestantism by the Catholic Reformation through their activity in the fields of preaching, controversy and education, had been legally established in France only a short time.

A few months later the wits of the Roman Catholic party had a chance to answer the Huguenots in a mocking epitaph. William of Orange, with a few of his relatives and immediate followers, joined the German mercenaries of the Huguenots in a march through Burgundy to form a junction with the Admiral. The Germans were commanded by the Duke of Deux Ponts (Zweibrücken). He shared the habit of heavy drinking which was as common among the German nobles as it was rare at the French court; where tradition and the example of the King and his brothers made drunkenness unfashionable. It was supposed that the wine of Burgundy made a special appeal to him and when he died at the completion of his brilliant march to join the Admiral, this epitaph appeared: "Pons superavit aquas; superarunt pocula Pontem," which might be paraphrased

[1] Monluc, III, 457-499.

in modern American, "A bridge crosses the water; wine has double-crossed Bridges." [1]

Another rumor had it that Deux Ponts died not of this sort of auto-intoxication, but by a more malignant sort procured by Catherine. She bitterly resented the charge, which included an attempt to poison at the same meal the Queen of Navarre. Catherine wrote that the Duke, who was already very ill on the day he was reported to have dined with the Queen of Navarre, died of fever and the fatigue of his forced march across France. Indeed, no other explanation is needed of his death and the similar death of the Admiral's brother, d'Andelot. Both of these captains persisted in leading their men when they ought to have been in bed. But the suspicion of poisoning had for many generations infected people's minds. In 1461 Charles VII died, firmly believing that his son Louis XI had poisoned him [2] and by the middle of the sixteenth century this idea of poisoning had become in France and Italy a veritable obsession. For example: a year or two before d'Andelot's death the Prince of Porcien, a Huguenot, was summoned by the King at the end of a day spent in playing tennis and kept waiting two hours. The King then gave him a tremendous scolding, ending with the threat of cutting off his head. The Prince went to his rooms, hot with rage and chilled by the falling night, drank three measures of wine, ate three dishes of entirely green almonds and went at once to bed. At the funeral his friends told each other that the Prince must have been poisoned,[3] a suspicion which seems, under the circumstances, superfluous.

Strengthened by his German mercenaries, the Admiral intended to move to the north, seize a passage over the Loire and thus hold a position threatening Paris, and in communication with the south. But the Huguenot nobles, especially that considerable contingent of them that came

[1] B. N. Port. Fon. 320 f. 113.
[2] Lavisse, Hist. de France, IV, 2, p. 322.
[3] De l'Estoile, XII, 70.

from the Province of Poitou, insisted that he must first capture Poitiers and he spent six weks in an unsuccessful siege, during which his army lost heavily by desertion. Meanwhile the army of the King had been strengthened and the Admiral now wished to withdraw to the south and form a junction with his adherents there. But again the impatience of the Huguenot nobles, many of whom were weary of the war, interfered with his better judgment and he was forced to accept battle in the plain of Montcontour on the 3rd of October, 1569. In the charge, riding twenty paces in front of his line, Coligny killed the leader of the royal German mercenaries, but received a wound in the face which so choked him with blood that he was obliged to retire from the field. His men, outnumbered about four to three, were decisively defeated, all the artillery was lost and the infantry was cut to pieces. For the Royalists, remembering what had happened at Roche l'Abeille three months before, where the Huguenots after surprising the vanguard of the royal army "gave quarter to only very few prisoners," made a great slaughter. Several of the prisoners were made to run the gauntlet. De la Noue, from whom I have taken this account of the battle, would have shared the same fate if the Duke of Anjou had not saved him from the soldiers. It was the first decisive engagement of the civil wars about religion. Jarnac was little more than a rear guard skirmish and Dreux and St. Denis were almost drawn battles, but now Tavannes sent the King a hundred and seventeen infantry standards and fourteen cavalry standards, with a royal loss of only three or four hundred men. The papal contingent in the royal army was allowed to send twenty-four flags as a present to the Pope. The Cardinal of Lorraine showed a more personal trophy. The young Duke of Guise was wounded in the foot. He had evidently inherited his father's genius for getting all the applause due him, for he sent a rider on a swift Turkish horse to carry the news to the King and the shoe from his wounded foot to his uncle

the Cardinal, who carried it around and showed it to everyone.[1]

Catherine thought the war was over and wrote to the Duke of Florence: "The rebels are so cast down by the victory that we have only to take two or three cities to reduce the whole country to its proper obedience." [2] She did not rate high enough the endurance of the Huguenots nor the military skill of Coligny; always at its best in defeat.

Catherine's time during the winter, spring and summer of 1569 had been spent in bed or on journeys. Early in the year she went to the northern boundary of Metz in order if possible to persuade the German Lutheran princes not to send an auxiliary force to fight in the Huguenot army. During this journey she visited the Cardinal of Lorraine at the princely seat of the house at Joinville. In Metz she was taken seriously ill. Her physicians did not think her life was in danger but for two months she was not able to write with her own hand and it was six weeks before she felt sufficiently well to send a Jacobin monk to Florence to fulfill her vow "of rendering thanks to God at the Nunciade in that city if He should grant her the grace to recover." When she had recovered, she went to Verdun, probably for convenience in continuing the German negotiations and returned thence to one of her châteaux in the vicinity of Paris. Apparently she still felt weak and disinclined for public business, but early in June, after a royal council which sat until four o'clock in the morning, she was obliged to start out to the camp to appease quarrels among the great nobles. She returned to Paris for a few days in the beginning of August but had to spend the rest of the year either in the camp or in its vicinity. She showed both courage and curiosity in regard to the actual operations of war. She had gone into the trenches at the siege of Rouen in the first war and now she watched a cavalry skirmish "very close from the other side of a little

[1] De la Noue, 677, 689; B. N. It. 1727, Oct. 8, 1569, f. 82.
[2] Letts. III, 283.

river and sent to the King as a souvenir the pistol of a Huguenot captain whom she saw taken prisoner." [1]

In spite of this physical weakness and fatigue, Catherine's determination to carry out in some way her plan of getting rid of the Huguenot leaders which had been foiled by their sudden flight and rising in arms, had remained unchanged through the spring and summer. In April she had told the Spanish Ambassador that she proposed to put the ban in the Italian fashion upon the Admiral, his brother d'Andelot and la Rochefoucauld, while at the same time she tried by some sort of diplomacy to withdraw the Queen of Navarre from the Huguenot party. She proposed to offer a free pardon and fifty thousand crowns to the man who killed the Admiral and twenty and thirty thousand crowns apiece for the other two. Months later the Ambassador reports another mysterious suggestion of the Queen Mother that he shall see "soon a service to God and this King so remarkable that Your Majesty and the world will rejoice over it." He was unable to think what this could be unless it meant some plot against the Huguenot leaders.[2]

Already Catherine had been encouraging a way of carrying out this plan of getting rid of the Huguenot leaders which implied very little expense or danger. An Italian offered the Queen to kill the Prince of Condé, the Admiral and d'Andelot by magic. For six months he was "in a room at Paris with a German workman he brought from Strasburg, who, under his direction, made three statues of men in bronze of the size of Condé, the Admiral, and d'Andelot full of screws in the joints which can be turned . . . and every day the Italian does nothing except study the births of these three with an astrolabe which he has and turns and unturns the screws. Before Condé's death he announced that there were signs that he was dead. When d'Andelot died he said the same, and now they are saying that the

[1] B. N. It. 1727, Mar. 6, 1730, f. 36, Cal. F. 1569, p. 18, 83; Letts. II, 250; III, 236, 244.
[2] Cal. F. 1569, p. 10; A. N. K. 1514 f. 78, 1509 f. 74.

same prophetic signs appeared in the statue of the Admiral fifteen days ago." There is no need for the doubts a modern writer has expressed about this story, for we have abundant proof that Catherine was exceedingly superstitious. The general belief, accepted by de Thou, that Catherine did not finish the many architectural projects she began because she believed that if she finished them she would die, may have arisen to account for what needs no other explanation except Catherine's reckless extravagance and continual lack of money. But there are many other evidences of her superstition. She had enough confidence in the celebrated soothsayer Nostradamus to quote his predictions in grave conferences with the Spanish Ambassador. An amulet in the shape of a piece of parchment covered with mystic inscriptions and symbols which she wore, still survived at the beginning of the 18th century. The year her husband died she had presented at the Louvre the Italian tragedy, Sophonisba. She never would permit another tragedy to be given in court, because she believed that this one had been an evil omen and in some way connected with the violent death of hr husband.[1]

Although astrology had been denounced by the leading Humanists, attacked by her husband's chief physician and its practice was about this time forbidden by the Parliament of England and the Estates General of France, Catherine was a firm believer in it. She kept two astrologers on her pension list at one time and consulted them on grave affairs of state. When young Francis Bacon was attached to the English embassy in Paris he was told that the Queen Mother "was given to curious arts." Fortune has preserved for us two examples of the sort of stuff that she got from these astrologers. The Venetian Ambassador reported the reply made to the Queen Mother by "a clever astrologer" supported by her "because of the taste she has for hearing the inclination of the stars in everything." He made an annual

[1] De Thou, IV, 182; Cal. F. 1569, p. 88; B. N. It. 1727 f. 37; A. N. K. 1514 f. 119, 1503, f. 30; Whitehead, Letts. X, 145; Castelnau, I, 284, Brant.

prediction for each year and when Catherine saw that he had predicted a year of happenings in France entirely different from that which came about, making fun of him and asking him how it was, "the old fox answered, 'Madam, your France is under such a variable climate that the astrologers lose their cue, but the coming year I promise you to divine everything because I shall predict everything the exact opposite from what the stars show.' As this reply made the Queen laugh very heartily, he got himself out of his fix." One of these annual reports of Catherine's astrologers has survived. It begins:

"MADAM:

"Wishing to carry out the duty laid upon me by Your Majesty, that is to draw each year the horoscope of Your Majesty and of your sons and seeing that in this month of March the horoscope of the Duke d'Alençon commences, etc., etc., . . . I wish to protest in the beginning that, in anything I may say, it must not be assumed that the event will necessarily follow, but only that those are the indications of the heavens; but God can dispose against those influences as He pleases."

As time went on the credulity of Catherine leading her to be preyed upon by men who would send her such reports as these, made the third of her sons to mount the throne very angry and he said, in the presence of two witnesses, "He was tired of seeing his mother cheated by false magicians who got a great deal of money out of her and didn't do anything." There is therefore no good reason to doubt this well established report that Catherine had more than a half belief in the power of enchantment against her enemies; the more so since we know that some years later she showed great attention to the evidence of a reported plot of a like sort against one of her own sons.[1]

Such survivals of the ancient belief in magic lingered everywhere. The very month when Catherine's Italian was predicting the death of the Admiral through his bronze

[1] Sir Thomas More. Figard, 33-38; Ordonnances d'Orleans, Isambert, 14, D'Ewes, Section 26, De la Ferrière ctd. (3), 390, Cal. F. 1568, p. 423; B. N. It. 1721 f. 201; Rel. App. XV, 66; Arch. Vat. Francia, I, B. 9, 612, Frémy 148 qtd. D'Aubigné, who heard this.

figures, the chief herald of Protestant Scotland was burnt for "conjuration and witchcraft," and a few years later the Parlement of Paris condemned a man and a woman to be hung in front of Notre Dame for necromancy, and their dead bodies burnt with their "conjuring books, silver plates, figures and spells to invoke evil spirits." [1] Even in our own times the founder of a new religion accepted by hundreds of thousands of not uneducated Americans, believed that her enemies were able to injure her from a distance by the use of malicious animal magnetism.

The outcome of Catherine's plot against the lives of the Huguenot leaders was much more dangerous than an Italian handling an astrolabe and turning screws in a room. The first of August, 1569, the Parlement, at the request of the King, decreed that the property of all those in arms against him was forfeited and that all their lands should revert to the Crown. The Admiral had enlarged the magnificent château of his ancestors, adding a great south gallery adorned by Primaticcio and his scholars, enriching its halls with bas reliefs by Goujon and frescoes designed by Giulio Romano and constructing stately terraces leading down to magnificent gardens, with an orangery which produced oranges. It was stripped and its splendid furniture and tapestries sold at auction in Paris.

Having thus taken the first step of declaring the Huguenot party in arms irreconcilable rebels, the Parlement a month later ordered the Admiral to be hung in effigy and offered the huge reward of fifty thousand crowns to anyone who would put him in the hands of justice. This of course was equivalent to offering a reward for his death, for "all the forces of the kingdom could not take him alive." Indeed to remove all ambiguity, some days later the royal Prosecutor got the Parlement to resolve that the same sum would be given to anyone who killed him.[2]

[1] Cal. F. 1569, p. 119, B. N. fds. fr. 3952.
[2] Bull. Soc. Hist. Prot. 31, p. 217; B. N. It. 1727 f. 60, 79, Cal. F. 1569, p. 108; de Thou, IV, 216.

Candidates for this reward were not long in presenting themselves. One of the Admiral's valets de chambre had been sent earlier in the war to carry letters to the Duke of Deux Ponts. He was taken prisoner by a captain of the Duke of Anjou's guard, who bribed him to play the spy and then released him. On his return voyage Anjou's captain engaged him to poison Coligny. But suspicions had been aroused by his long delay and he was arrested, confessed his crime, and was executed. A few weeks later the Sieur de Maurevert, descended from an ancient family of the nobility of the robe, owner of a considerable landed estate, married to a daughter of a former marshal of France, determined to murder the Admiral; probably for the hope of reward and to obtain his own pardon for being in the Huguenot army. But after waiting for some time without getting a chance to carry out his design, because the Admiral was now so well guarded, he made up his mind to kill the first lieutenant of the Admiral, Monsieur de Mouy. He carried out his intention very much in the same way in which Poltrot shot the Duke of Guise. When he escaped to the royal camp he was well received by the Duke of Anjou, but the Catholic gentlemen all sent him to coventry and he went to court. The King wrote to his brother, the Duke d'Alençon, at Paris to give Maurevert the collar of the order of Saint Michel and to see that the city of Paris gave him a proper reward in money according to his merits.[1]

[1] De Thou, IV, 216; Vaissière (2), 103, pntd. 112, B. N. fds. fr. 10191 f. 26.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FALL OF THE GUISE. LETTERS AND ART.

In spite of her initial determination to push the war with the Huguenots this time to a finish, Catherine, even before the battle of Moncontour, was beginning to lean again towards her policy of balancing between the two parties and the reason was that her old jealousy and fear of the Cardinal of Lorraine had revived. Restored to greater power than he had exercised since the death of Francis II, the Cardinal began again to show a querulous and overbearing egotism. The Spanish Ambassador sketched the situation in six letters to the King of Spain and the Duke of Alva during the month of July; of which a summary was made for the King's reading by his secretary: "The tyranny and insolence with which the Cardinal of Lorraine rules the affairs of state and the finances of this kingdom and now is trying by various ways to do the same thing with military affairs, has made the Duke of Anjou and others arouse the suspicion of the Queen Mother that the Cardinal is trying to shut her out of the government . . . and the Queen, in order to defend herself, is seeking the aid of the heretics and particularly of the Duke of Bouillon and the Marshal Montmorency." The consequence was that the Marshal Montmorency, who, in the month of April was away from court and under great suspicion, by the middle of July, surrounded by a great number of the gentlemen of his faction, never left the side of the Queen Mother.[1]

As a first step in undermining the power of the Cardinal of Lorraine, Catherine succeeded in planting a very deep and dangerous jealousy between him and the Nuncio,

[1] A. N. K. 1512 f. 45. Comp. 15, 17, 21, 25, B. N. It. 1727 f. 55.

who, at his first arrival in France, was very confidential with the Cardinal. By September the Nuncio was accusing the Cardinal to the Spanish Ambassador of peculation in the matter of carrying out the provisions of the Pope's bull permitting the sale of church lands for the Huguenot war. The Nuncio finally attacked the Cardinal to the Queen in the most unlimited terms and showed her the copy of a letter which had been sent to Rome saying all possible evil of her, suggesting that, although it was anonymous, it had really come from the Cardinal of Lorraine.[1]

Coligny had tried to take advantage of this situation (of which some hint had probably reached him from his cousin Marshal Montmorency) to make overtures for peace in July 1569. Catherine considered it a very astute move on his part, because it put forward a demand for freedom of conscience as the most necessary thing. If it was not granted, he would at least have gained the advantage of freeing himself from the suspicion of fighting for selfish reasons. If it was granted, he would separate the King from the support of the Pope and the Catholic princes and so have a better chance of gaining his real aim. For that reason the council decided to escape what Catherine considered a snare, by not answering the overtures at all. Nevertheless a couple of months later, shortly before Moncontour, the Admiral had again in vain made tentative offers of peace: for his secret friends at court had undoubtedly informed him of that extreme poverty which made the King write to his brother, 'May God look in pity on me and my kingdom which can never in the world last if this game goes on longer; as it seems to me that the Admiral intends to have it do in spite of all his pretense." Coligny therefore persisted in efforts for peace even after his great defeat and in November an envoy appeared before the King and the whole royal council to say that the Huguenots begged them on their knees, as very affectionate subjects, to state the terms on which

[1] A. N. K. 1512 f. 65, f. 83.

it would be possible to establish peace.[1] The King received this third message graciously and it was arranged that the Huguenots should send peace commissioners.

The hesitation in Catherine's mind as to whether to push the war by all means, including putting a price on the heads of the Huguenot chiefs or to work towards peace, is well seen in the correspondence of the Crown with its agent in Switzerland. Early in July he was ordered to make an additional levy of eight thousand Swiss mercenaries; before the end of August he was ordered to suspend that levy until further notice; early in December he was again ordered to make arrangements for this levy. The King was probably moved to this new order by false information which had reached him that the ambassadors of fourteen German Protestant countries had held an assembly at Erfurt, and formed a league with the Queen of England. Meanwhile the Cardinal of Lorraine continued his efforts to exclude Catherine from authority and the concealed tension between them increased. This circumstance led the Spanish Ambassador, who reported and commented on it in a number of letters, to conclude that the King would probably make peace with his rebels. Report spread this suspicion as far as Rome and the Pope wrote to Catherine urging upon her that there could be "nothing in common between Satan and the Children of Light. The Crown ought to crush the embers of this civil war in order to inflict upon the common enemies of all Christendom the punishment which they so richly deserve. She ought to see to it that the young King is not drawn aside from the path of rectitude into voluptuous pleasures, but should take no other counsels than the excellent ones which she always gives him." Whether she was answering Elizabeth, Philip II, or the Pope, Catherine was always able to find a sufficiently sharp response for too insistent counsels from the outside as to how the affairs of France ought to be conducted. She replied to the Nuncio that the King was

[1] B. N. It. 1727 f. 54, 76, Nouvs. Acqs. 6002, f. 33; Letts. III, 285 n.

old, strong and powerful enough to know how to govern his state by himself without being obliged to take advice or laws from outside princes.[1]

Catherine had naturally felt after the slaughterous defeat of the Huguenots at Moncontour that they must accept peace on any terms, but it soon became evident that the question of peace or war was not one which could be decided solely according to the necessities of her court policy. The Huguenots were still able to keep the field and so long as they kept the field, there was always the chance of foreign interference on their behalf. Already English ships had landed cannon and powder at La Rochelle and soon after the battle of Moncontour a body of English gentlemen volunteers under Sir Henry Champernowne had ridden into the Huguenot camp.

Elizabeth was, it is true, in trouble. An insurrection had broken out in the North of England. The leaders appealed to Roman Catholic sentiment, destroyed the English Bible and the prayer book in the churches, and marched under the banner of the old Pilgrimage of Grace displaying the five wounds of Christ. The movement had the secret backing of the Spanish Ambassador and his promises of help from Spain. But Philip was not yet anxious to see the widow of a French King, Mary Queen of Scots, on the throne of England, nor willing to waste, in aiding a hopeless insurrection, his already strained resources. No aid came from him and when the levies of the populous southern shires had gathered, the rebellion collapsed and its leaders were driven across the border into Scotland. All this had happened between the battle of Moncontour and Christmas. The insurgents had applied to the French Ambassador for money on the plea that they were fighting to reëstablish Catholicism in England. In answer Catherine wrote to him in the middle of January, 1570, before certain news of the

[1] Letts. X, 258, 259, 264; B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 6001 f. 92, Cal. F. 1569, Nov. 25, A. N. K. 1512 f. 176; Potter, 86, Arch. Vat. pntd. Thompson App. 548.

collapse of the rebellion had reached her: "If things are still going on well, encourage the chiefs of the movement as much as you can and give them hope to receive from France all possible aid and favor, even aid in money; but, if the movement has been broken and defeated, go and see my good sister the Queen of England, and deliver to her the congratulatory messages which are sent you over the signature of my son the King." Elizabeth received these very graciously and assured the ambassador that such aid as had reached the French insurgents from England, was given by private persons whom she could not restrain. She had already pointed out that, since the Protestants were beginning to debate the proposition whether it might not be right before God and one's conscience to depose sometimes a prince, and the Pope was claiming the right to dethrone any sovereign whom he thought despotic and heretic, all crowned heads were now rendered unsafe. She suggested that it was time for all sovereigns to take counsel together against this common danger from both sides. Elizabeth's message contained a falsehood, for the Huguenots sent an envoy to thank her for her help. But Elizabeth was not willing to send them aid openly and Catherine did not want, by refusing to accept her lame excuses, to force her to do so.[1]

The amount of confidence which one of these women put in the smooth speeches of the other was about equal to what she received and knew she received. Nevertheless they were beginning to see that their interests were in many ways similar. The most dangerous enemy of each was that great power which tried to remain the ally of both—Spain.

Although the Huguenot gentry, able to march twenty-five to thirty miles a day and to live on the country, could keep the field indefinitely, they knew perfectly well that they were not strong enough to wage another offensive campaign. Therefore, in the beginning of 1570, their delegates came to court to state the terms on which they would make peace. They asked permission for Huguenot worship

[1] La Mothe, II, 421; III, 4; Letts. III, 224, pntd. n; III, 291.

in every province and in every city and town, the restoration of all their property forfeited and payment by the King of their debts to their German mercenaries. A long debate followed. The Crown first offered liberty of conscience without liberty of worship, but gradually drew nearer and nearer to the Huguenot conditions. The truth was that whether Catherine really wanted to make peace or not, she was driven towards it by the increasing misery of the country, the all but unanimous advice of the royal council, and above all the complete lack of money. Catherine, whose sense of humor triumphed over the hardest circumstances, received about this time through one of her ambassadors a picture of a unicorn's horn which the owner wanted to sell for 100,000 crowns. She bade him say that she was not buying unicorn's horns just then, but she had two bigger ones she would be glad to sell at 100,000 crowns apiece. In the end even a person of such unimpeachable orthodoxy as the Ambassador of Tuscany concluded that "Peace was more necessary to the King than it was to his adversaries." By the month of July the only people at court who were really opposing it were the Nuncio and the Spanish Ambassador, who wrote in the end of June that three-fourths of the court were Huguenots and that he was really beginning to fear for his life. His fears were exaggerated, but his meddling in the affairs of France did rouse the greatest indignation. Marshal Tavannes, the victor of Montcontour, was in the habit of talking very loud. One day in a voice which everybody in the large chamber of the King, including the Spanish Ambassador, could plainly hear, he said, "These Spaniards would do better to govern their own house and not mix in the government of other kingdoms. It is perfectly well known that they only want to foment these civil wars so that each party will destroy the other and leave them superior to all. For my part I'd rather see a hundred white cloaks (the Huguenot uniform) than one red cross (worn by the Spanish soldiers). Because

after all, these are our brothers and the others are the natural enemies of France." [1]

The anger of the Pope at this attitude toward the Huguenots was much increased by the attitude of the Crown in regard to the Turks. Early in the spring the Nuncio presented a letter urging France to enter into an anti-Turkish league because the friendship between the French Crown and the Turkish Sultan which had lasted for many years had long been a scandal to Christendom. France had made, a few months before, a commercial treaty with Turkey, providing free entry for her ships into all ports, justice in the Turkish courts, the trial of all cases between Frenchmen before their own ambassador or consul, aid for all French ships in distress, and the redemption of all slaves sold by corsairs. France was not anxious to interrupt her relations with her old-time ally and profitable customer. With the advice of Venice, who thought that France as an enemy of the Turks could do nothing and as a friend could be counted on to act in the interests of Venice, the King under the schooling of Catherine, gave a very vague answer to the Nuncio, pointing out that the league would be apt to arouse the suspicion of the Protestant German princes and force a counter league and that while he was not against the Turks he was not with the Turks.[2]

This Politique tide which was sweeping over the court—anti-Spanish, non-persecuting, pro-Huguenot—was sure to weaken the authority of the Cardinal of Lorraine and his house, however much they might try to swim with it. It was to be foreseen that as soon as the house of Montmorency began to grow strong, an open quarrel would break out between some one of its members and some member of the house of Guise. Such a quarrel did arise on an occasion whose sardonic humor all those engaged in it seem to have

[1] B. N. It. 1727 f. 116, 119, 121, 173; Neg. Tosc. III, 609; A. N. K. 1515, 1520 f. 13; Douais (1), 279; Letts. X, 266 (à narwhals horn), Palandri, 128.
[2] A. N. K. 1535 f. 2; B. N. It. 1727 f. 144, 152.

entirely missed. It was an ancient custom that, as a proof of his humility as a follower of the lowly Jesus, the King should, on Holy Thursday, wash the feet of twelve poor men and serve them at table. The greatest nobles of the court helped him in the task. The King was standing by the table in order to put the dishes upon it. The Duke of Guise as Grand Master, an office he had inherited from his father, gave the first dish to the King's oldest brother to carry to him. Marshal Montmorency then stepped forward to receive the second dish and carry it to the King in his service of humility and love. The Duke of Guise, however, turned aside and gave it to his own brother, the Marquis du Maine. The Marshal and his wife, who was a bastard sister of the King, made a terrible scene. When the King would not grant the reparation they thought due, they left the court and refused to be satisfied even when the King and Queen visited them.[1] This quarrel did not, however, restore the authority of the house of Guise, nor could a designed insult of the young Duke serve to keep the head of the Politique party from court very long.

It was perhaps in the hope of winning a desperate stroke to regain their influence, so fast disappearing, that the house of Guise became at this time involved in an intrigue which completed the alienation of the Queen and her son from them and led to a complete and long continued loss of power.

Catherine's only unmarried daughter, Margaret, was then a beautiful and very impressionable young girl of eighteen. The Duke of Guise was an exceedingly handsome courtier of twenty. In the middle of the winter his uncles, the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, conceived the idea of marrying him to Margaret, and arranged to provide a marriage portion for him of 200,000 écus a year out of their benefices. The young princess developed a fondness for the Duke which gradually became so well known in court that it was very much remarked upon that Catherine, who was

[1] A. N. K. 1517 f. 61, 1727, f. 135, 148.

pushing her daughter's marriage to the King of Portugal, seemed too oblivious of it. But she was already showing her anger to the young Duke quietly. So the Cardinal himself wrote to the young man's mother: "Your oldest son is here in very great trouble and you and I will bear our part of it although nobody says a word about it yet. I have never seen a longer or more cruel anger." The result was that the Cardinal of Lorraine felt obliged to leave court and it was plainly intimated to the young Duke of Guise that he should marry. Catherine had a stormy scene with the uncles and insisted that the Duke's marriage with a rich widow, the Princess of Porcien, should be solemnized immediately. Margaret evidently showed herself recalcitrant; whether as the English Ambassador thought because she preferred "to tarry in France rather than to eat figs in Portugal," or because of a *tendresse* for the handsome Duke, is hard to say and the difficulty is not in the least resolved by the fact that Margaret in her memoirs denies that she ever cared anything for the Duke of Guise. At all events, her attitude finally terribly angered her brother the King, and one day he came to his mother's room in his dressing gown at five o'clock in the morning with only his chamberlain. They sent to call Madame Margaret and she came to the room with a single attendant whom they made go outside the room, at whose door they posted the King's chamberlain as a guard. After a stormy scolding, Catherine even laid hands on her and her brother handled her so severely that for more than an hour she was too disheveled to go back to her room. This seems to have decided Guise that he had better accept the marriage that Catherine wanted. The King promised the young couple a very large present of money but the anger of the heir to the throne was not appeased by this submission of the Duke. Talking with some of his friends who suggested that possibly the Duke of Guise wouldn't forget the princess even after his marriage, he cried out, "If he lifts his eyes toward her I will make him bite the earth with my dagger in his

heart,"[1] a threat that he carried out for other reasons eighteen years later.

Catherine's hope of marrying Margaret to the King of Portugal seemed for a time to be blocked and she began to consider the advisability of marrying her to young Henry of Navarre, the titular head of the Huguenot party; a design whose desirability was emphasized to her mind by the reported determination of Henry's mother to marry him to the sister of the Duke of Württemberg. This marriage had been arranged by Catherine's husband years before when Margaret was only six years old, and the revival by Catherine of the old project shows that the Politique party was dominant in the royal councils. It was so dominant that the Cardinal of Lorraine refused to return to court, although the King wrote inviting him to come back.[2]

All these influences urging Catherine towards a return to her old policy of reconciliation and balance between the parties, were strengthened in the end of the spring by the evidence of the recovery of the military strength of the Huguenots. The best modern critics feel that the Huguenot disasters of the campaign of 1569 were partly due to mistakes in the generalship of Coligny. If this be true, he redeemed his mistakes brilliantly. Rallying his cavalry, he had moved to the south and then started on a long circular march of 1200 miles through the eastern part of France levying contributions as he went. The royal leaders could not crush him because they could not catch him. He kept the field and his forces grew, until at Arnay le Duc, nine months after the apparently overwhelming disaster of Moncontour, he beat back the assault of the much larger royal army with a loss so serious that Marshal Cossé did not care to renew it.

On the 8th of August, 1570, peace was announced, by

[1] A. N. K. 1515 f. 1, 6, 52, 89, 115; Letts. III, 329; B. N. It. 1727 f. 165, 203, B. N. fds. fr. 3232 f. 32, Cal. F. 1570, p. 291; Simancas ctd. Bouillé, II, 466.

[2] B. N. It. 1727 f. 155, 172, 179; Cal. F. 1570, A. N. K. 1515 f. 104, 1520 f. 4, Puchesse.

the Royal Edict of St. Germain. It reinstated Catholic worship in all places where it had been forbidden by the Huguenots. It granted to all gentlemen with the right of high justice, permission to hold in their châteaux Reformed worship for their family and any others who wished to come. The lesser nobility had the same privilege for their family and ten friends. The Edict of St. Germain continued the right of Huguenot worship in all places which were in the hands of the Huguenots on the first of August, 1570, and appointed in addition two cities in each of twelve governments or provinces of France where worship might be freely held. But no Reformed worship might be held within two leagues of the King nor within ten leagues of the City of Paris. The Huguenots were granted the right to appeal any case from the bigoted Parlement of Toulouse and a peremptory challenge of a certain number of judges in seven other parlements. The Edict expressly recognized the Queen of Navarre, her son and the Prince of Condé as good relatives and all the gentlemen who had sustained them as loyal subjects and servitors. As a pledge, it granted to the Princes of Navarre and Condé and twenty gentlemen of the Reformed religion the four towns of La Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac and La Charité for two years. At the end of this time they were to be returned to the King. From the point of view of the Huguenot nobility this peace was an extension of the liberty granted by any previous edict and from the point of view of the Huguenot burghers it did not practically restrict any previous liberties. The new element in it was the recognition of the loyalty of the Huguenot chiefs and the granting of towns to be as security for the fulfilment of the Edict. The party already possessed an organization separate from that of the state in the synod of the Reformed church. The Edict seemed, at least for a time, to recognize that organization as a legitimate part of the state. In addition the King promised to pay what the Huguenots owed to their German mercenaries.

On the publication of peace, the chiefs of the straight-out orthodox party, the Dukes of Montpensier, Nemours, Nevers and the Cardinals with the exception of the Cardinal of Bourbon, withdrew from court. It was to be foreseen that the Politiques and some of the moderate Huguenots would at once become the favorites. The amiable qualities of the young Duke of Guise, however, kept him at court, though without authority, and after his marriage was arranged, he recovered favor with the King. Marshal Montmorency became the leading personage of the kingdom. Spain was very indignant both at the peace and the influences which prevailed around the King. The Ambassador finally drew down upon himself a stern rebuke from Catherine, who, "in a very much altered voice," said, "The King of Spain apparently wants to play the master in our house. Suppose the King and I send to tell him the faults of *his* chosen counsellors." The Pope was horrified by the peace, and the Nuncio thought at first that neither the Queen, nor a single man of those who were close to the King, believed in God. But within a couple of months he changed his mind and was sure that the Queen Mother and her sons were all Catholics and in addition reverenced the person of the Pope as if he were their own father.

"They tell me not to be disturbed over the concessions they have made, because they are doing it all with dissimulation for an object worthy of the name of the Most Christian King. Although I wrote pessimistically the other day, I believe that, in spite of their weakness and the evil counsellors with which they are surrounded, they speak the truth. All the tolerance they show is with the object of getting that bad teacher (Coligny) with his followers to court or in some place where they can put their hands on them. These are things which must not be talked about and must not be spoken of to others even the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Duke of Montpensier, who are related to him and cannot be expected to hate their own blood." [1]

[1] B. N. It. 1727 f. 183; Arch. Vat. Aug. 22, ctd. Rajna 12, A. N. K. 1515 f. 69, 1517 f. 87, 1518 f. 5, Potter 107; Arch. Vat. 28 Nov., 157.

Catherine doubtless intended that the Nuncio should draw from her vague words precisely the false conclusion of definitely planned treachery which he did draw. She had not yet entirely given up the idea of marrying Margaret to the King of Portugal, and knowing that nobody could do as much to help that plan as the Pope, she tried to remove from his mind the evil impression made by the peace. She also tried to influence the Pope from a different angle by having the Cardinal of Bourbon, from whom her other method of attack was carefully concealed, suggest to the Nuncio that it might be a good thing to marry Margaret to the King of Navarre with the hope of bringing him back to Catholicism—a match the Pope would be anxious to do everything in his power to prevent.[1]

These complicated intrigues did not altogether divert Catherine from the social and artistic pleasures which always were a large part of her life. The marriage of the young Duke of Guise to the Princess of Porcien took place in the autumn, and at the great banquet in the family mansion the table was set with plate and crystal, the property of the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, to the value of a hundred thousand crowns. The Queen and her sons showed themselves very gracious. Catherine was also interested in getting ready for the wedding of her son the King, to the daughter of the Emperor, and she was buying silks and cloths of gold and silver. She wrote to the Duke of Florence to order the Florentine workmen to show the agent she sent to Florence the best they had and to help him to buy for the lowest possible price.[2] Nor did she neglect to continue the display of that capacity for ingratiating tact, a natural ability developed under the hard circumstances of her early life, which always remained, not only an expression of the surface good nature of her personality, but a conscious help in her statecraft. For in-

[1] Arch. Vat., 23 Sept., A. N. K. 1518 f. 3, 1517, Sp. Amb. "This hellish marriage," B. N. It. 1727 f. 197; see Note.
[2] Letts. III. 303, 320.

stance, she wrote this note to the Duke of Nemours, the husband of the widow of the Duke of Guise:

"My Cousin:

"I send you this word only to make my excuses for having kept your wife so long. I would like to have kept her longer, but since she isn't willing and you are going to see her, I assure myself that you will forgive me and will feel certain that I haven't kept her in order to displease you but in order to give myself the great pleasure of having her with me. Indeed I have the very greatest regret to hear her say that you are going home, because I cannot look forward to the pleasure of seeing both of you when I arrive at Paris." [1]

At the end of the year 1570 there came to the French Court in the train of the Duke of Ferrara, sent on a mission from the Pope, the young Italian poet Tasso. He wrote a complimentary poem to Catherine, but in spite of later tradition it is not probable that she ever talked with him. This was not on account of her indifference, but rather from the fact that he was then without distinction in the world of letters. Had he come a few years later when his fame was assured, Catherine would have made much of him. For although her voluminous correspondence does not show the wide reading or the capacity to handle language which appear in the letters of Elizabeth, and literary allusions are rare in her talk so fully reported by ambassadors, we know from other sources that she not only patronized literature, which might have been nothing else than following the traditions of her house and the fashion of the times, but also that many poets and literary men found her sympathetic; for we find in her patronage of literature, the same vivid interest in personality—in people—which can be traced through all her patronage of art. Of five great masters of the French tongue in her day, Amyot, Calvin, Montaigne, Rabelais and Ronsard, Rabelais died before she had any real power of patronage, and Calvin lived an exile bitterly hostile to the Crown of France, but

[1] Letts. III, 300.

with Amyot, Montaigne and Ronsard she had intimate relations. It does not mean much that they put compliments on her wisdom and taste into their works—men of letters sent eulogies to patrons or powerful friends much as men of society now send bouquets to their hostesses—but there seems to be an unusual note of sincerity in some of the things they said of her. It is plain that she wished to be a patron of literature. Pierre La Ramée, who endeavored to reform university instruction in the direction of the Humanities, left Paris under her safe conduct in 1562 and found refuge for a time in the library and garden of Fontainebleau from the persecuting zeal of his colleagues of the faculty of theology. When he returned to the Collège de France, he worked for years under her protection at his great task of forming an encyclopædia of the liberal arts in French.[1] She told her favorite architect, Philibert Delorme, that the palace of the Louvre was "consecrated to the muses."

All her life she collected books and at her death her library consisted of 4,550 volumes. Her beautiful collection of nine hundred manuscripts in Greek and Latin theology and philosophy, Greek and Hebrew literature, canon and civil law, she had gotten from the estate of her cousin, Marshal Strozzi, at his death in 1558, with a promise to his son to pay for them. She never did so, but the family of Strozzi advanced and enriched in France by Catherine's influence, had no reason to complain of her. At her death these manuscripts were in the house of her first chaplain, the Abbé of Bellebranche, where they remained until the close of the century, when the repeated order of Henry IV compelled him to turn them into the royal library; whence they passed into the Bibliothèque Nationale. Catherine took great interest in geography, for at her death thirty-three hand drawn maps were found among her personal belongings, ranging from England to Guinea. Her personal tastes in books are perhaps indicated by the list

[1] Waddington, 151, 153.

of twenty-two volumes found in the armoire with four doors between the windows of the huge palace she built in Paris towards the end of her life, of which only fragments remain. There are three books on topography, two relating to divination, two on the genealogy of her family on her mother's side, a volume of architectural drawings (some perhaps done by herself), a manuscript on vellum of "The Abuses of the World" by Pierre Gringoire, a "Consolation on the Death of the Late King Henry," a book on chess, a work on history and nine little books of different authors. These books were superbly bound in black or green Levant morocco, velvet or vellum.[1]

We know that Catherine sometimes listened to readings from new books dedicated to her by the authors. One very curious dedication was addressed to her. Nicot laid tobacco at her feet under the title the "Queen's herb" or the Medicean herb. We have no record that she also sampled this work dedicated to her, though considering her active intellectual curiosity it is not improbable. We know also that she read history, for she several times quoted historical parallels in councils of state but the indications are that, although she kept up the traditions of her house in collecting a library she cared very much more for people than for books and preferred the talk of a live poet to the page of a dead one.[2]

Catherine could hardly be a Medici and live from fourteen to thirty at the Court of Francis the First without being a patron of art. It would seem as if patronage was in the very blood that ran in her veins and the very air she breathed for more than fifty years. And it is really very astonishing to find how small a place artistic taste has in her correspondence. Aside from a very limited number of letters which give directions in regard to some building or builder, it is almost possible to count on the fingers all the references to art in the more than six thousand of

[1] Bull. du Bibliophile, 1858, p. 916, Brant. Bonnaffé, 83.
[2] Brant. Chevalier, Debtes, XLVII; see n.

Catherine's surviving letters. Hence it would be very easy to do what many have done, base vague general statements about her exquisite taste on very insufficient foundation. One of the shrewdest and most cultivated of the Venetian Ambassadors wrote to the Senate: "The Queen Mother has this much of the temperament of her ancestors that she desires to leave behind her a memory attached to buildings, libraries and collections of antiques. So she has made a beginning in every sort of artistic patronage and then dropped it and turned to doing something else." The truth in regard to Catherine de Médicis is that the uncontrollable appetite which made her repeatedly eat herself sick, her tendency to loud laughter, her vulgar passion to make good matches for her children at any cost, all confirm the impression of her personal appearance and the negative evidence of her letters that she was not at all a person of discerning refinement. When one looks behind interested eulogies and the uncritical attitude which the glamor of royalty is apt to impose on the judgments formed about the taste and skill of princes by their intimate friends of a humble rank in life, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the exquisite taste of Catherine's great-grandfather Lorenzo had in her so degenerated that she was a lover of luxury rather than a lover of beauty. Outside the realm of architecture there is nothing in the facts recorded about Catherine's patronage of art which suggests that she was a connoisseur rather than a mere wealthy amateur.[1]

Catherine loved luxury and lived extravagantly, partly out of set purpose because she thought magnificence a way of hiding the desperate poverty of the treasury which continued intermittently during the thirty years of her power. So far as articles of luxury were concerned, she apparently did not take the first thing at hand, but was at some pains to seek those that were also articles of art. For example, when she needed fans, she wrote to her ambassador in Spain to get her two dozen like the one she sent as a

[1] Rel. I, 202; Paul van Dyke, Rev. Hist. 6.

model, and she had hangings of Cordovan leather made from designs first sent to her for approval. She imported from Rome a table of inlaid porphyry and another of serpentine with feet of carved and gilded wood, together with two heavy cases of heads and little statues in marble.[1] She collected the beautiful enamels of Limoges and at her death had two hundred and fifty-nine pieces. Her Indian china, her crystal glasses set in gold and her cups of carved agate and lapis-lazuli made a great impression on the English Ambassador and his wife. During the lifetime of her husband she asked the governor of Piedmont to send his violinists to court and made their chief "King of the Violins." He composed the music for the ballets executed by the ladies and gentlemen in waiting for fifteen years. Catherine loved music and often had it in her rooms for the entertainment of the court.

So far as we can trace the details of her patronage of the greater arts, we find again that it was always related to her social tastes and habits, her family pride and affection, and her intense interest in people. Architecture, including garden architecture, was her favorite art. She built a new wing to the Louvre and started the Tuileries, but never finished it or lived in it. She built a great new palace for herself in Paris with a main façade of 330 feet, a garden and a grand court 116 feet square. She added a grand gallery to Chenonceaux and at Blois she arranged her rooms and decorated them with superb panelling. She built the château of Monceau thirty-six miles from Paris and the country house of St. Maur five miles from the gates, and also the château of Chaillot or Grandmont. The amount of money she spent on these undertakings roused angry criticism among the people crushed by taxes. It seems certain that in architecture at least Catherine had her own taste and possessed some skill. This impression does not

[1] Letts. III, 241; X, 273; Douais (2), I, 375; B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 20599, May 9, 1566; Bonnaffé, 14, Cal. F. 1580, p. 163, 176; Marchand (1), 420; Brant., VII, 377.

come from eulogies. It is strange that so many modern writers fail to recognize the worthlessness of judgments expressed in the eulogies of authors and artists upon their royal patrons. But in statements not intended for her eye one of Catherine's architects has expressed his approval of her taste and skill and his opinion is endorsed by Montaigne. Another clear proof of her intelligence in architecture is the fact that she asked one of her chief ministers to give the young son of her first architect Bullant some dispatches to carry to Rome "in order that he might go and see for the improvement of his art the beautiful things there are there." [1] Catherine exercised this developed taste in architecture invariably in building for herself or her family. She promoted only one architectural undertaking outside of a house or palace, the building of three rich mortuary chapels at St. Denis for herself, her husband and her children. She inquired about the ruinous condition of the chapel in the Church of the Minerva at Rome, where her uncles Leo X and Clement VII were buried, but apparently, after making the inquiry, she never in the eight years before her death found the money to restore it.

We have seen already that Catherine bought antique marbles in Rome and she later ordered an envoy to the Pope to bargain for a beautiful Adonis owned by a physician suggesting that it might be paid for by a benefice in the Church. But so far as we know her patronage of the art of sculpture was chiefly given to portrait statues and monuments. She asked the Grand Duke of Tuscany to arrange for having a kneeling statue made in marble for the chapel of the nuns of the Emmurate in Florence, "after my portrait, which I send." She had two statues of herself made for the tomb of her husband at St. Denis and tried in vain to get Benvenuto Cellini to come back to France to make a great equestrian statue of her husband in bronze. An allegorical group, The Three Graces, was indeed done

[1] Bonnaffé, 7; Letts. II, 103; VII, 332; X, 494; Chevalier, XXXIV, ctd. Barthélemy, 129; Letts. IX, 29.

to her order by Germain Pilon, to whom at her death she owed large sums, but we find here again the personal note in the fact that it was intended to hold in the central urn the heart of her husband.[1]

When Catherine's father came to France to get married he had brought as a present from Leo X to Francis I two canvases of Raphael, a Holy Family and the Archangel Michael, but though Catherine owned some religious pictures and some landscapes and historical pictures, it is evident that her favorite paintings were portraits. She often sent them as presents and asked for them, e. g. her picture and those of her children sent to the Duke of Saxony in jewelled frames, the many portraits of herself or her children in the Pitti palace, and the letter asking the Duke of Tuscany to send her portraits of the chief men and women of his court.[2]

We have a legal inventory of the contents of her city palace. It is an astonishing list, especially when we remember that she had much rich furniture and many works of art in her rural châteaux. The Parlement adjudged that this inventory alone would pay her debts of 800,000 écus (equal at least to fifty million francs). It makes evident her fondness for portraits of which the palace was full: for instance, a series of eighty-three little portraits six inches square let into the panelling in one room, two other series of thirty-two set in the wall, and another series of twelve matched portraits eighteen inches high. Of four hundred and sixty pictures, three hundred and sixty-five were portraits and amid the splendid stuffs of embroidered silk and satin; the pillows of satin and velvet, crimson, gray and yellow with fringes of silver; the great tapestries and hangings; the vases of jasper, Fayence and porphyry; the carvings of rich crystal and coral; the busts of bronze and the antique marbles, the Indian tables, the coffers carved,

[1] Pasquier, Bk. XIII, L. 8; Letts. II, 394; VII, 209, 217; Benvenuto Cellini, Liv. II, Ch. 112; Ronsard, VII, 169.
[2] Letts. I, Introd. p. ii; Castelnau, I, 410.

painted or covered with mother of pearl, the huge German cabinets inlaid with silver and other marquetry, the great silver chandeliers, the splendidly bound books; the curio cases, ebony inlaid with ivory or covered with crimson velvet bordered with gold braid; the bed covers and canopies of lace inset with silk and mingled with threads of gold and silver, the enamels of porcelain and glass, the great tapestries of Flanders and the hangings of silk wrought with gold and silver; the Turkish, Persian and Egyptian rugs; the gilded leathers, orange, violet, red, green or silvered black, adorned with Catherine's monogram [1]; these hundreds of portraits must have given the dominant note to the whole rich and varied decoration which was the background of Catherine's daily life in what was for her later years, her home. The overmastering interest of Catherine was people and the game of managing them. During thirty years it is improbable that she was ever alone and more than doubtful whether she ever wanted to be.

[1] Chevalier, Debtes Int. p. 50, Bonnaffé.

CHAPTER XXV

CATHERINE THE MATCH-MAKER

No country could pass through an internal convulsion like the three civil wars about religion without enormous injury. The effects upon France may be briefly suggested in three fields, the spiritual, economic and governmental. That the civil wars bred cruelty, lawlessness and hate is noted by all contemporary writers. Their economic effect was no less disastrous. During the generations which saw the close of the fifteenth and the opening of the sixteenth century, France had gone through a remarkable economic expansion. A large part of her soil formerly covered with forest, had been put under cultivation and much of it rented in small farms on long lease. The result of this was not only, as the best economic writer of the beginning of the sixteenth century estimated, that a third part of the kingdom of France was changed from forest to arable land, but that cultivation became on the whole more varied and more careful. France soon had large quantities of grain and wine to export; a progress which appears among other ways in the very noticeable increase of the number of millers and coopers. This increase in agricultural riches went hand in hand with a great increase in commerce. In addition to grain, wine, fruit, meat and fish, France exported raw silk, books, jewelry and furniture and imported large quantities of a very varied list of articles of luxury, so that the writer already cited estimated that "for one merchant in the kingdom in the times of Louis XI there are more than fifty now." (Francis I.) This prosperity had been checked by the foreign wars of Francis I and Henry II, but had rapidly recovered in the interval. It was suspended by the civil wars, which brought devastation, the abandonment of culti-

vation and the interruption of foreign commerce; especially from privateering, which was practised, not only in war, but also during peace, in a way that seems to us scarcely distinguishable from piracy. It enormously impeded "the traffic of merchandise," which, the King wrote to one of his ambassadors, "is the true Peru of my kingdom." Even more marked was the moral devastation wrought by these desperate civil wars. Crime of all kinds increased and on both sides some soldiers, accustomed to rape, massacre, arson, torture and pillage during the guerilla warfare which in many localities continued even during the intervals of peace, degenerated into mere bandits, fighting really out of sheer ferocity and greed and entirely ready to gratify their passions on friend or foe. It was this unleashing of criminal passions scarcely disguised by a thin pretense of zeal or loyalty which drew from the poet Ronsard the apostrophe "Oh thou historian who art writing with a pen which will not lie, the monstrous history of our age!" [1]

The civil wars had also brought about certain changes in the state. They are thus described by a very shrewd observer whose dislike of heresy never blinded his eyes to facts:

"The first civil war brought us not only the connivance of the magistrates with the worship of the new religion, but also the erection of separate governments for certain provinces in the very heart of France. The second civil war brought it about that there was scarcely a city which did not have its separate governor to oppose the Huguenots; a change which has since turned into general police power to the great oppression of the people. Before this war the only one who had guards around him was the King; now every governor-general of a province has guards at the expense of all of us, and this has continued in peace, increasing the cost of government so that the people have no longer the means to pay it. In addition the King built citadels in several of the principal cities of his kingdom at a very great expense. This last war has also brought great confusion into the government itself; because, to reward his loyal gentlemen when he had no money, the King has made some councillors

[1] De Seyssel, Douais (1), 336; Ronsard, VII, 13.

of the privy council in brevet and has given to others the order of St. Michel, so that these two bodies have now fallen almost into contempt. Further, at the very time when we are pretending to fight for the Church of God, the custom has grown up of rewarding captains and gentlemen with bishoprics or abbacies which they hold under the name of vicars. And in addition, the Huguenots have claimed certain cities as hostages, just as if this peace had been made with a foreign ruler. Nevertheless," he closes, "I thank God for having sent us rest from war. I prefer, after all, an intermittent fever to a continuous one."[1]

The King turned to new taxes to meet his pressing financial needs, increased by the fact that the ambassadors sent from the electors of Saxony, Brandenburg, the Palatinate, Württemberg and Hesse with congratulations on the peace, insisted that the debts owed to the German mercenaries of both sides, not only for this war but for the previous war, should be paid at once. The Council decided to lay an income tax and a hearth tax on the whole kingdom. But the nobility, citing their ancient privilege of paying no taxes except the tax of blood by the service in war, refused to pay and would not be moved from their determination by any appeals of the King.

To mark their discontent great numbers of them declined to accompany the King at his formal entry into the city of Paris, although many appeared magnificently dressed at the windows before which the procession passed; a demonstration which finally determined the King not to attempt to collect the tax. The King then began to economize. By reducing the army and other curtailments in the expenses of the government, it was estimated that he had cut down his annual charges about five millions of livres and turned an annual deficit into a surplus. While peace lasted, therefore, the problem of the badly administered finances was not immediately threatening.[2]

The peace found Catherine still in the midst of plans for

[1] Pasquier, V, 10, p. 131.

[2] B. N. It. 1727 f. 221, 224, 230, 238; Cal. F. 1572, p. 27; B. N. fds. fr. 3251, King to gentlemen of Normandy.

what always seemed to her the most interesting and absorbing object of endeavor—the marriages of her children. After the King was definitely engaged to the second daughter of the Emperor, the thing that she had most at heart was the marriage of her daughter Margaret to the young King of Portugal. By the beginning of the year 1571 she had made up her mind that the King of Spain was trying to stop it in order to marry one of his own daughters to the King of Portugal. She therefore let it be known that she was considering more earnestly than she ever had done before, the marriage of Margaret to the young King of Navarre.

This caused an immediate resumption of the negotiations for the Portuguese marriage and by the middle of the spring Catherine had arranged for an interview with the Queen of Navarre and was at the same time discussing the terms on which Margaret might be willing to marry the King of Portugal,[1] so that, with the two negotiations going on at the same time, she could take the one "which seemed to her to offer the better conditions." She found an additional difficulty about the second match in the reluctance of her daughter, who threw herself at the feet of her mother and her brother the King, begging them not to send her to Portugal. We can imagine from their attitude towards her *tendresse* for the young Duke of Guise that this would not have seemed to either of them an insurmountable obstacle, but, as time went on, it became evident to Catherine that the bridegroom himself did not want the match; chiefly, as she was informed, because of the influence of the Jesuits. She determined therefore to push really the marriage with the King of Navarre, which the prevailing influences at court strongly urged upon her as the best means of permanently pacifying the kingdom.

As soon as it became evident that the negotiations for this had reached an advanced stage, there was another vio-

[1] B. N. It. 1727 f. 228; A. N. K. 1519 f. 26.

lent protest on the part of the Nuncio and the Ambassador of the Spanish King, each of whom had terrible scenes with the Queen Mother on the subject. When this proved a waste of breath, Spain renewed offers in regard to the Portuguese match. Catherine turned as deaf an ear to the offers as to the protests and the King had become so much offended by the treatment of the previous offer of his sister's hand to the King of Portugal, that he said he would "cut his sister's throat rather than have her make that marriage now." Catherine urged the Pope through the Nuncio and through a special envoy she sent to him, to grant a dispensation for the marriage with Navarre, because the bride and groom were within the canonical degree of relationship. She said the King was now so set upon the match that he would make it whether he got the dispensation or not, while the party who favored the match (the overwhelming majority of all those at court) spoke significantly of what had happened in a previous generation when the Pope had refused to facilitate the marriage of the King of England. The Spanish agent believed that all this talk was only a bluff in order to get back the cautionary cities from the Huguenots and to force the reconsideration of the Portuguese match, but he was mistaken. The Queen Mother spent two days consulting with the Queen of Navarre, and, in spite of a very cordial letter from the King of Spain saying that he had always been in favor of the Portuguese match and now thought it would be of the greatest advantage to all Christendom, she persisted in her design and succeeded in overcoming all the objections raised by the Queen of Navarre to the solemnization of the marriage by a Roman Catholic priest. Before the middle of the spring of 1572 the match was made.[1]

Intricate as were these negotiations for a marriage between the King's sister and the titular head of the Hugue-

[1] Arch. Vat. Nuncio, 2 Aug., 1571; B. N. It. 1727 f. 283, Aug. 15; Arch. Vat. Nuncio, Aug. 24, 17 Oct. A. N. K. 1524 (63), 1525 (70), 75; B. N. It. 1727 f. 344, Oct. 5, 19 May, 1574; A. N. K., 19 May, 1574, Cal. F. 1572, p. 74.

nots, they were as nothing for intricacy compared with the negotiations about the proposed marriage for one of the King's brothers to the greatest of all Protestant princesses, the Queen of England. Catherine handled this affair with the greatest secrecy, for she was desperately afraid either of being fooled by coquetry in the service of diplomacy or else of mortally offending Elizabeth. Sometimes she wrote herself, because, as she explained, she dared not trust a secretary, and she ordered the Ambassador to fold his answers very small and give the special messenger strict orders to throw away or destroy the packet if he was arrested. No less than three of her letters have survived from this correspondence on which she wrote, "Burn this letter." [1]

A marriage between the English Queen and the French Royal House had long been a favorite plan of the Politiques, and in the spring of 1570, before the civil war was over, Catherine in conversation with the English Ambassador threw out a feeler in the shape of a suggestion that the Queen of England ought to marry.[2] Apparently the hint did not fall on deaf ears, for not long after the Cardinal of Châtillon suggested to the Duke of Anjou that it might be possible for him to marry the Queen of England and Catherine suspected that this was not done without the knowledge of the Queen. Either sincerely or to gain time she rather played off, but when the receptive attitude of Elizabeth had convinced her that perhaps the offer might be mentioned seriously, Catherine found a new and very unexpected obstacle. She wrote to her Ambassador saying that it was a secret she could not trust to any secretary or to anyone except himself, but her son had sent her word by the King his brother that he would not ever marry the Queen of England, even if she wanted to marry him, because he had heard such evil things of her that he should consider himself dishonored by taking her for his wife. She was

[1] Letts. IV, 10, 62, 65.
[2] Letts. III, 313.

very much chagrined by the loss of "such a kingdom and such grandeur for my children." [1]

This opinion that it was a pity to lose such a kingdom out of the family, was one which would especially appeal to her children and particularly to the Duke of Anjou, the King's next older brother. Catherine shows more than once in her letters great satisfaction in her rise from the position of a duchess without a duchy, to a queen and the mother of kings and queens. Ambition was the breath of her nostrils and she succeeded in instilling into all her children a very intense pride. The atmosphere of the court was dominated by an inflamed egotism quick to take offense and avid for every sort of distinction. A typical instance of this excessive pride and desire for distinction bred in the household of Catherine was shown, a few years later than the epoch we are now describing, by her little granddaughter, the child of Charles IX, who died at the age of five and a half. "That little princess would often say she was descended from the two greatest houses of Christendom, France and Austria, and she could name her remote ancestors as well as any herald in France. Once when she was sick, her uncle (who had succeeded her father as King) came to see her. The baby princess pretended to be asleep and kept her face turned to the wall, although he called her three times. When her governess turned her round she would scarcely speak to the King and after he left her governess scolded her. She answered, "Why should I receive him graciously when he has not sent to inquire after my health—I who am his niece and the daughter of his older brother and one who does not dishonor the family." [2] This attitude in a child less than five years old enables us to understand the causes of those quarrels among her children which were to be in the closing years of her life Catherine's greatest sorrow and greatest difficulty.

No one of Catherine's children learned this lesson more

[1] Letts. IV, 6, 17, 27.
[2] Brant. The governess of the princess was Brantôme's aunt.

quickly and more thoroughly than the Duke of Anjou. He was fairly consumed by a restless ambition to wear a crown. He and his mother considered at various times projects to gain for him the crown of Sweden by an insurrection, the kingdom of Algiers or Cyprus from the Sultan as a bribe for keeping France out of the league against the Turks, the kingdom of England by marriage and the kingdom of Poland by election. Catherine was therefore able by playing upon this restless ambition of her son to change his mind and to bring him to consent to the match with Elizabeth. She pushed the negotiations with all her power and sent over two pictures of her son, one for the face and the other for the figure, painted by the court painter Janet. The wooing did not make very much progress, for Elizabeth said she would not give a final answer until she had seen her suitor and he refused to go to England, unless he was guaranteed beforehand the right to the public exercise of his religion. When the Queen said she could not grant that, Anjou positively refused to have anything more to do with the match—to the enormous regret of his mother. She cherished an intense anger against his three most intimate gentlemen-in-waiting, "who put these fancies into his head. If we can find out for certain [that they did it] I assure you they will be sorry for it." [1]

It may be suspected that Catherine carried out this threat of vengeance upon the man who had stepped between her and her son. She had been accused by the Huguenots of killing the Queen of Navarre, the Admiral's brother and the Duke of Deux Ponts, but these people died of natural causes and not from poison. Up to this point in her life it is impossible to find any grounds fit to stand the test of historical examination, that even suggest a strong suspicion of her direct connection with the death of any human being. But now Lignerolles, the Duke of Anjou's chief gentleman-in-waiting, was assassinated in full daylight in a public place in Paris not far from the palace, by

[1] Richard, 98; Letts. IV, 29, 52, 56, 62; X, 298; B. N. It. 1727 f. 251.

another gentleman of the Duke's household, assisted by a number of young noblemen of the court. His murderers, though perfectly well known, were pardoned by the King. Murders were quite common in court circles and a little later the Ambassador of Savoy pointed out that there had been fourteen murders in three months; all of them unpunished. But although everybody knew who the killers were in this case, nevertheless, at the request of fifty gentlemen of the court, they were immediately pardoned by the King. It was evident to everybody that something more than the usual quarrel lay behind this particular murder. The Ambassadors of Tuscany and Florence reported that he was killed for making trouble between the King and his brother. The Ambassador of Savoy said he had been killed by the command of Catherine because he was a spy of Spain. Sir Francis Walsingham, who was on the inside of the marriage negotiations, came, in all probability, nearer to the truth when he wrote, "Lignerolles, who by the House of Guise and the rest of the Spanish faction was made an instrument to dissuade his master from this marriage, was slain the nineteenth of this month and his death yieldeth no small furtherance to the cause. I hope therefore that Sir Thomas Smith's first dispatch will bring the olive branch." [1]

If Catherine suggested to some one who hated Lignerolles that his death would not be very severely punished, she got nothing but the gratification of anger out of the murder of the man who was urging her second son not to do what she advised. Anjou remained fixed in his determination that he would not consider the marriage unless he could be guaranteed the free and open exercise of his religion in any place where he might happen to be, and, in spite of the wrath of his brother and the "hot tears" of his mother, he refused to change his mind. On this point the negotiations stuck; Catherine said to the English Ambassador that she

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 741, 744; Rel. I, 4, p. 306; Arch. Turin ctd. la Ferrière, (4) 276, (3) 318; Digges, 161.

did not see why it was any more dangerous to allow two religions in England than it was to allow two religions in France: to which he could make no reply. The Queen said her son thought "he would be damned unless he could have his mass, and that he would not be content with the permission to have it privately in a chapel, for he was very devout and fasted so much in Lent that he looked very unwell, so that she was angry with him and said she'd rather he was a Huguenot than to hurt his health with such overprecision." There is no reason to doubt, as the English Ambassador did, the sincerity of this devotion to the observances of his religion, which remained characteristic of Anjou until his death; though the Ambassador was probably right in suggesting that this willingness to stand on this point was increased by the suggestion, made to him at this juncture by the orthodox party, that he should be made commander-in-chief of the league against the Turks and so win a great land battle which should rival the glory of the great sea victory just won at Lepanto by the Italians and Spaniards under the command of Don Juan, the illegitimate brother of Philip II.[1]

When the match had thus been definitely broken, Catherine was very anxious to placate the Queen of England and in the last interview on the subject she told the English Ambassador that an agent of her son in Flanders informed her that the Spaniards had sent two Italians to England to poison the Queen and that they had written twice to give her warning because they were as careful of her as they were of themselves. To which the Ambassador replied, "If all is true that is said, they have not spared the same devilish enterprise against your own blood, Madam. Does Your Majesty remember what Captain Cockburn said to you when you took leave of your daughter the Queen of Spain, 'Dictes adieu, Madame, a votre fille perdrie' (he would have said perdue). With that we might perceive in her countenance as though the word would have

[1] Cal. F. 1572, p. 10, 11, 4; Soldan, 24, 121.

made her laugh, but the thing made the tears stand in her eyes ready to fall out and her countenance very heavy." For it was now a common report in France that the Queen of Spain had been poisoned by her husband: a report which there is no reason to believe true.[1]

The Queen of England, although her pride was hurt by the breaking off of a match which she never intended to make, was too good a player at the game of statecraft to dwell upon her resentment any further than was useful to her purposes. Catherine at once proposed a new bridegroom in the person of her younger son, the Duke d'Alençon, "who will not show himself so scrupulous in the matter of religion," and Elizabeth, in spite of the fact that she was thirty-eight and her new suitor seventeen, took this offer under consideration. Meantime commissioners of the two crowns were discussing the formation of an offensive and defensive league. Two difficulties arose. England wanted it expressly stated that each country would defend the other if it were attacked on account of religion, while France wanted a general agreement to stand together without any express mention of religion. France also felt bound to do something for the Queen of Scots and declared that they could acknowledge no sovereign of Scotland except her. In reply, the Ambassador pointed out that she had "killed her husband and shamefully married her adulterer and the murderer of her husband, who had two wives at least then living." In addition, she was concerned in a plot to kill the Queen of England. Catherine answered that if she was so dangerous, they might send her to France where she would be quiet. "Will you have her head or her body?" he asked. "Tush," she replied, "we would have her whole and alive. The Queen my sister is so merciful and so gentle that I cannot think she will do her any hurt." [2]

But the common interests of the kingdoms were too strong for them to be kept apart by a difference of religion,

[1] Cal. F. 1572, p. 10.
[2] Letts. IV, 75; Cal. F. 1572, p. 19, 25.

a broken marriage or an imprisoned queen for whom Catherine had no liking. On the 19th of April, 1572, the Treaty of Blois made a close defensive league between Elizabeth and Charles IX, specifying what forces each was to furnish for the defense of the other in case of attack by a third power. The treaty contained also an agreement for the pacification of Scotland and another commercial agreement granting reciprocal advantages to the merchants of both countries. But Catherine was not at all satisfied by an alliance with England which rested only on a commercial and military treaty and in May she sent a special embassy headed by the Marshal Montmorency to urge upon Elizabeth the Alençon marriage. She wrote to Elizabeth: "If we had anything more precious than my son, we would offer it to you with all our hearts. For I have always longed to have the happiness and honor that, as I love you like a daughter, I might be able to call myself your mother." [1]

Catherine was not altogether occupied by government and diplomacy and we should not get a true picture of her life if we judged that the proportion of her surviving letters concerned with state affairs indicates accurately that her attention was all but engrossed by them. There was always a less strenuous side of her life, on which she spent a great deal of time and found much pleasure, which appears only very occasionally in her collected correspondence. For example, in the fall of 1571 she wanted to do what Marie Antoinette afterwards did at Versailles play at farm life. So she wrote this letter to her cousin, the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

"My cousin, after having written about affairs of importance and having helped us so much through your Ambassador that we begin to have better hopes of peace in this realm than we have had—that is the reason why I will say to you that, after so much work, not forgetting what I owe to the service of my children, I want when we are near Paris, to have a farm where I can pass my time in honest pleasures, such as having a house to suit me,

[1] Cal. F. 1572, p. 87; Letts. IV, 103.

and having had one built called St. Maur des Fosses, I want to set up there a dairy where I want to have all sorts of people who know how to make all kinds of cheese, jams, salads, butter and cream, salt meats, preserved fruits. And knowing that because you are of the same blood, you have made something similar, I beg you to help me get work people whom you think fitted to aid me in this project. And in order that you may understand better my idea, I send you a plan drawn to scale. It is a very little thing to write about, but to those I love, I talk about everything and you will do me great pleasure if you will do the same to me. And in order that this letter may not be endless, I will pray God to have you in His holy keeping. CATERINE."[1]

It is evident also that she spent a good deal of time and thought on her Christmas presents for this year. In November she wrote the court jeweler:

"Dujardin, I am very glad you have got well and I am very anxious to be sure to have for Christmas all the things on the list I have written out, so work hard to finish it. And send me word, as soon as you get this letter, if I can't have all these things for Christmas. Praying God, Dujardin, to have you in His holy keeping. Written at Duretal le XVIme jour de Novembre. CATERINE."

The list written in Catherine's hand (to imitate in translation her own weird spelling) includes whatches, chaines, mirers, a pear of braselets, a costly hat ornament for the Duke of Loreyne and four peyntings (probably miniatures). Directions for the use of the jewels she sends for these things are minute, especially for a ring. (Again I imitate her French spelling.)

"The emerold is a ston which brakes easily and there are two handes which means faith, which is the emerold and there must be a motto to say that the faith and friendship which the giver of this ring wishes is not like the ston but like the two handes which are inseparable. And the coler of which the ring is anameled is tane which is lasteing without fayding."[2]

There is no note, as in the case of the other gifts, to show to whom Catherine meant to give this ring, but it would

[1] Letts. IV, 78.
[2] Letts. X, 291.

not be a bad guess to say it was for Elizabeth, who finally sent to her Ambassador in France two letters about the offer of Alençon's hand, each so vague and both together so entirely contradictory, that even Sir Francis Walsingham must have been quite reduced to despair by the problem of following his instructions. He evidently succeeded in accurately reproducing the tenor of both letters in his audience with the King, for Elizabeth wrote to him that the French Ambassador said that the King gathered from the interview with the English Ambassador that she thought Alençon too young and that they ought to have an interview: "Which two declarations cannot but contain some absurdities, as we think you yourself can perceive. Therefore we have answered that either you mistook our mind or our first letters and so misreported them, as we cannot think you did, or else the King mistook your words; and that where you were commanded by us to say, that the cause was very difficult (which we think you did) for so do our letters plainly direct you, it is likely that the King understood it as if you had said impossible." She then continued in so involved a strain that it would be difficult for anyone to tell from reading the letter whether she did or did not want to meet her young suitor.[1] This was on the 22nd of August, 1572, and two days later the entire world was astounded by a terrific explosion of violence and hate at Paris which made a bloody interruption to the wooing.

[1] Digges, 226, 235.

CHAPTER XXVI

CATHERINE'S CHILDREN RESENT CONTROL

Before describing the event for which Catherine was more responsible than any other person, it will be necessary to show the atmosphere of the court and to go back and trace two intrigues which throw the best light we can get upon the problem why a woman of her long political experience, who had shown herself during the greater part of her rule entirely averse to violence, determined upon a deed that, in a higher degree perhaps than any other recorded on the pages of European history, deserves to be called "both a crime and a blunder."

We have a detailed description of the chief personages of the French Court which was written by an outsider just at this crisis. But we must discount its bitter humor because it was written by a Spanish Ambassador after his recall, as *persona non grata,* which Catherine had forced upon Spain for his great insolence to her.

"The King is jaundiced and melancholy, much given to violent bodily exercises and the use of arms and addicted with an incredible passion, to hunting. He does not like any one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber. His chief attendant, the Count de Retz (given to him much earlier by his mother), is an Italian and I know that he has said, 'If I could once see myself free from that dog I would never allow another Italian in my house.' . . . He hates business and tries to get away from the sittings of the Council. He has a violent disposition and is a terrible swearer. He is fond of his brothers and sister, although he has had many quarrels with the Duke of Anjou. . . . The Queen Mother is a great friend of merriment in banquets and feasts. She is determined to keep in her hands the government which she now has and for that reason is weak in the defense of our holy faith and the welfare of her son. Ever since Francis II

until now, she has kept the government in her own hands by the system of balancing one party off against another, to the disservice of God and the injury of the King, her son. . . . Her most influential counsellors are Morvillier and Limoges; the second is entirely given over to the devil [he means he was a heretic]. Morvillier . . . seems to have more prudence and weight than all these counsellors, but he is cold, fairly frozen in all affairs of religion and, although he has the name of being a good Catholic, I think him just as much of a heretic as the other. . . . The thing that pleases the Queen Mother most is to praise her sons and her great service in bringing them up so virtuously. Every time she has showed me any very extraordinary courtesy and attention it was for the purpose of cheating me about something which she had hidden in her heart.

"The Duke of Anjou is very suave and delicate, and altogether given over to women. He takes the hand of one and pulls the ear of another and in that way he passes a good part of his time. His brother, the Duke of Alençon, has small weight: a vicious little chap who says he is a Catholic but keeps himself surrounded by atheists.

"The Cardinal of Bourbon has very little understanding. He pretends to be a great Catholic, but all the officials of his household are pronounced heretics: he knows it and does nothing about it. The Cardinal of Lorraine is the incarnation of all the ambition and audacity in the world, a man who, when he has position, destroys himself by haughtiness and when he has no position is weak and of little personal authority: nevertheless all said and done he knows more than anybody else and seems to be the chief prop of the Catholic faith.

"His brother, the Cardinal of Guise, is nothing.

"The Cardinal of Pellevé is very Catholic and seldom speaks the truth.

"The marshals are six and if they were seven they could be compared to the seven deadly sins because of their bad faith and their corrupt minds. Montmorency, the first marshal, is now the chief protector of the Huguenots. He goes to mass and has gained the reputation of sometimes telling the truth, which is rather a new thing in this country. Marshal Damville (his brother) is ambitious, has the name of a good Catholic and says he is a great servitor of Your Majesty. Marshal Cossé rules all the secret plans of the Queen Mother in war and finance; he is an atheist and belongs entirely to the Admiral and Montmorency. Vielleville is thought to be an atheist. He also is a friend of the Admiral and Montmorency, although he was

launched on his career by the Guise. He is a great counsellor of the Queen Mother.

"Tavannes is the best soldier of them all. He acts like a Catholic, although he has shown very poor proofs of it for the last two years. He belongs altogether to Anjou. Villars is thought to be a Catholic. He is a friend of Montmorency and an enemy of the Guises, but has very little weight.

"Of the princes of the blood the Duke of Montpensier and his son are the best Catholics in the kingdom, but beyond that both are of little substance.

"The Duke of Longueville is one year a Catholic and the next a Huguenot and the next an atheist. He is not thought to be a man of weight or judgment.

"The Duke of Nevers is a brother of the Duke of Mantua; he is very Catholic and a good man, but he cannot go out because of his leg; so now he has little authority.

"The Duke of Guise is a boy and thought to have more courage than ability. He receives always with much pleasure the presents sent to him by Your Majesty.

"The Duke of Nemours pretends to be very much of a soldier and is always complaining of the King and the Queen Mother.

"The Duke of Aumale (the brother of the Cardinal of Lorraine) is one of the best soldiers in France. He pretends to be a great servitor of Your Majesty. He is very circumspect and a great liar." [1]

Aside from these leading men, the mass of the courtiers and officials were either silent or expressed opinions Politique or Huguenot. When the great leaders of a party were silent their "servitors" usually took to cover and kept quiet. The Cardinal of Lorraine was entirely excluded from affairs. As the Spanish Ambassador wrote, his influence was not worth "a snap of the fingers." He made desperate efforts to recover his position at court and so rally the friends of the house around him, now trying to get the Pope to urge his recall as the head of the Catholic party, now trying to persuade Catherine that his influence would be strong enough to get permission to sell more ecclesiastical property to help the financial straits of the crown. The Nuncio, who hated him, said "He was trying to trade on

[1] A. N. K. 1527 f. 71.

his religion." But all these efforts were in vain and, at the end of the spring of 1572, he gladly took the excuse of the mortal illness of the Pope and went to Rome to be ready for the conclave to elect his successor.[1]

It is easy to cite confirmations of the Spanish Ambassador's observation of some of the striking features of the character of Charles the Ninth. It is manifest that like all the sons of Catherine he was, either because of his inheritance or his education or both, a neurotic, with an unstable nervous equilibrium. He was subject, like both his living brothers, to uncontrollable outbursts of rage. And, in addition, he had a strange and morbid pleasure in the sight of blood. He set his dogs on a cow to see it torn in pieces and threw a live mule to his lions. He rode into a herd of deer helplessly entangled in the nets and led his gentlemen in slaughtering them with their swords; a proceeding which intensely disgusted a visiting English sportsman. On one occasion he made a noose in a piece of cord he was playing with and, throwing it around the neck of one of the gentlemen of his suite, he said, "If you were so and so" (naming a man he hated) "I would finish strangling you." The frightened victim could only stammer out, "Yes, sire, but I am not so and so." The King was perfectly well aware of this morbid trait in his character and although he was a connoisseur of good wines, seldom, in the later years of his life, drank anything but sweetened water, because he believed that wine increased this tendency to anger and cruelty. He had good native capacity and dabbled in the pleasures of the mind, although he never pursued them with that vigor which he displayed in all sorts of bodily exercises. He frequently showed kindly and generous impulses, but he was both weak and violent, and these traits appeared in copious floods of profanity, for he was "accounted one of the worst swearers in France." The satiric Latin epitaph, "His unwholesome mind always made him

[1] A. N. K. 1521 f. 45; Bouillé, II, 473, ctd. Simancas; Neg. Tosc., III, 662; Arch. Vat., 24 Apr. 1572.

act either fatuously or furiously," is not so far wrong, if "always" is changed to "sometimes." [1]

The children of Catherine were brought up in a reverence for their mother which was almost painful. Even after Elizabeth became Queen of Spain, she never opened a letter from her mother without trembling for fear lest she should be scolded. The Venetian Ambassador wrote of Catherine about this time, "She is so respected and reverenced by her children that up to now no one of them has ventured even to lift an eyebrow without her advice." Charles the Ninth never lost his affection for his mother and, up to about the time we are now considering, he had showed himself entirely dependent upon her guidance. Just before the peace was made, some sort of a quarrel had arisen between them so that the King did not go to see her for two days, but this was only a temporary thing and their relations soon became more intimate and affectionate than ever. There was nothing the Queen resented more than any attempt to lessen the complete dependence of her sons on her advice. Just after peace was signed she had a terrible quarrel with Montmorency, accusing him of trying to do this with the King, and Lignerolles was perhaps murdered for trying to do it with her second son. The chief business of the King's first gentleman-in-waiting, the Count de Retz, was to see that the King did not lose this dependence upon his mother, and it was probably this feeling that they were reporting everything he said and did to his mother, which was the real cause of the King's intense hatred for De Retz and all the other Italians who were in his household. Just about this time he made a feeble attempt to throw off her authority and act on his own responsibility in the intrigue with Tuscany.[2]

The occasion for this intrigue is to be found in the quarrel for ceremonial precedence between Florence and

[1] Arch. C. VIII, 335; Cal. F. 1571, p. 413; Neg. Tosc. III, 533; Haton, I, 400; Rel. I, 4, p. 303; Brant., V, 255; de l'Estoile, I, 31.

[2] Brant. Elizabeth de France, Neg. Tosc. III, 630; Arch. Vat. Nuncio, 23 Oct., 28 Nov., 1570; A. N. K. 1521 f. 42.

Ferrara—one of those ceremonial questions on which even large states laid great stress, while to the small potentates of Italy they seemed almost the most important affairs with which their statecraft could be concerned. The trouble had begun in 1543, at the entry of the Emperor Charles the Fifth into Lucca, when the Duke of Ferrara rode on his right hand and the Duke of Florence on his left. It was immediately carried to the court of Francis the First, where, in spite of such little influence as Catherine could exert, the King decided that Ferrara had ridden on the proper side because the more ancient reigning houses had to take precedence over newer ones, and the Duke of Florence withdrew his embassy from France. When Catherine became Queen of France, a new Ambassador promptly appeared at court and his master hoped that her influence would give him the precedence over his hated rival. Henry the Second, however, would say nothing upon the subject except that the two ambassadors must live in peace together at his court. The Duke again recalled his Ambassador, and for eight years more Florence had no regular Ambassador in France. When Catherine became regent, there was no change in the decision in regard to the question of precedence, but a practical solution of the difficulty was found in the tacit understanding that the Ambassadors of Florence and Ferrara were not to meet in public ceremonies.[1]

To the memorial services held at the French Court at the time of the death of the Prince of Spain, 1568, the two ambassadors had not been invited; nevertheless they made their appearance and took places near the Venetian Ambassador, who gives this account of the farcical scene which followed.

"Ferrara stood close to me and held me in his arms from behind. The other in the same way seized me in front, trying to drag me to one side and pushed me as far as he could. The Ambassador of Scotland, seeing this, and that a scandal was about to follow, because both had armed followers, said we had

[1] Neg. Tosc., III, 165.

better get up from our seats. We did that, but they would not leave me and crowded up the more closely, so that the sweat stood on my forehead while I tried to appear indifferent. Word came from the King's brother that they had not been invited, and ought to go out. Whereupon each began to protest that it was the other's fault. They made more and more noise and another message came to go out and the King would hear them the next morning. But neither would go out and the flood of words mounted higher and higher. I said that as neither would go out first I would take them both clinging to me unitedly. So I took them to the King's brother in the next room and said, smiling, 'See how these two ambassadors have made me prisoner, Your Highness, but judge if it is just.' He laughed and all the others and said they must let me go. So finally they went out, each talking continuously and trying to give his reasons for what had happened." [1]

In this long quarrel of nearly thirty years standing, the Duke of Florence had made, in the summer of 1569, a master stroke. He got Pope Pius the Fifth to issue a bull which declared that Tuscany was a grand duchy, whose ruler took precedence over other princes and followed next in rank after kings with the title of Most Serene Highness. This action was bitterly resented not only by Ferrara, but by two of the great powers; the Emperor, who conceived that his feudal rights as head of the ancient Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation were violated by this elevation of his vassal to a higher rank without his consent, and the King of Spain, who claimed feudal rights over Siena and twelve years before had invested the Duke of Florence with that fief. Spain's formal objection was of course not her real one, which was that she claimed the dominant position in Italy and would suffer no change in the balance of Italian politics unless she was consulted.[2]

Now the Huguenots tried to use this old quarrel in Italy to help their policy. Teligny, the brilliant and sympathetic son-in-law of Admiral Coligny, was one of the chief negotiators of the Peace of St. Germain, which had closed the

[1] B. N. It. 1726 f. 272.
[2] Palandri, 121.

third civil war, and the King told him that he was urged by the Emperor and the King of Spain to join in sending an expedition into Italy to punish the Pope and the Duke of Florence. Teligny at once saw the opportunity for a new and daring combination. He advised the King that the Emperor would not be very active in this war and that if he would join together the Pope, the Duke of Florence, the Netherland rebels under the Prince of Orange and the German Princes, to attack Spain and Flanders, the Huguenots would serve enthusiastically and he would have peace at home and victory abroad. The King listened to him and sent an envoy to persuade the Duke of Tuscany to join him in such a league. During the entire negotiation he took great pains to keep any word of it from getting to the ears of his mother. Even the very unenthusiastic reply of the Duke did not cool his ardor and he could not refrain from making allusions to some great plan which started gossip at the court. This gossip and the news that came to her from Italy, soon put Catherine on her guard and she doubtless knew pretty much all about it before the Duke sent a second reply to Charles advising him that, in an affair so very delicate, it would be very much better for him not to decide finally without taking the wise advice of his mother. Catherine, informed of the affair by her son, was too tactful to frown upon his plan at once; she pointed out difficulties but pretended to consider it, knowing all the time that she could pretty certainly depend upon the Duke not to enter into any such plan. The King became more and more excited, showing to the Tuscan Ambassador great wrath against the King of Spain and adding, "This thing ought to be settled; my mother is entirely too timid." [1]

When the messenger returned again from Florence, Catherine had a very private conversation with him for two hours in her garden. Learning that the Duke, as she expected, had refused the incongruous alliance and had advised the King to stay at peace with Spain and the Em-

[1] Neg. Tosc., III, 438, 653, 660, 678, 681, 694; Palandri, 137. See Note.

pire, she arranged for an interview the next morning with the King. While the messenger was delivering his message, the Queen kept continually interrupting and saying, "Sire, note the affection of this Prince, how worthy he is that you should love him; you see how much it would be for his advantage that you should make war against the King of Spain, but he prefers to act to his own disadvantage rather than to fail to tell you the truth and to give you good advice; . . . keep his counsel to stay at peace . . . because it's good and holy." At last the King, who stood leaning a little against the window, straightened himself up and taking off his cap, put his right hand on his breast and said, "Madam, I give you my word to take his advice and I swear that I will never make war nor undertake anything without your counsel and full knowledge." The wisdom of the Queen's judgment in regard to the trustworthiness of such an alliance, was demonstrated about nine months later, when the Duke of Tuscany suddenly lent a large sum of money to the Duke of Alva for suppressing the very followers of the Prince of Orange whom the Huguenots had proposed as his allies.[1]

The humiliating Tuscan experience did not destroy the young King's desire to get out of his mother's leading strings and gratify the love of arms which had been one of his passions. This sometimes took the morbid forms common to the melancholy day dreams of youth which enjoys weeping over its own imaginary tragedy. One morning, while changing his shirt, the King suddenly called all the gentlemen-in-waiting and bade them notice a black birth mark under one shoulder in order that "when I fall in battle you can recognize the body." "Sire, don't think about such things." "Why!" answered the King, "do you suppose I would sooner die in bed than on the field of battle?" War was always on the King's lips and a new plan for war was now laid before him. Admiral Coligny was not at court while the Tuscan plan was discussed, but after receiving a

[1] Neg. Tosc., III, 713, 788, 795.

written invitation from the King he came to join him at Blois with a small train, about the time when it broke down. He was very graciously received by the royal family. The King gave him solid marks of favor, a hundred thousand livres in cash to make up for his losses in war, a year's income of the benefices of his brother, Cardinal Châtillon, who had recently died in England, and an abbey; for it had become so much the thing to grant abbeys to people of no ecclesiastical standing, soldiers, women, or even children, that the granting of one to a heretic did not rouse anybody's sense of humor.[1]

The King frequently played tennis with him and the Duke of Longueville. He attended the meetings of the royal council and seemed entirely at his ease.[2] He suggested that as the close of foreign war in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was followed by civil war, fomented by Spain, both parties should unite against that hereditary enemy. He promised to rally all the forces of the Huguenots to the royal army and, with the aid of the German princes and the insurgent Netherlands, bring back Flanders to the French Crown. But the King was cautious after his disappointment, Catherine thought Spain too strong to attack in open war, and Coligny could not get a favorable hearing for his plan of war next year. In addition his presence at court began to threaten serious trouble. The family of Francis of Guise still firmly believed that the Admiral had hired his assassin. The dead man's son and successor, Henry, who had joined one of his uncles, the Duke of Aumale, in refusing to take part in the scene of reconciliation at Moulins five years before, was now grown to man's estate and he gathered a large body of adherents at Paris and took such a threatening attitude that, to avoid possible bloodshed, Coligny was asked by the King and Queen to withdraw from court after a stay of some two months.

But in his absence the project of attacking Spain found

[1] Rel. I, 4, p. 303, Douais (1) ctd., Arch. Mod. de Thou, IV, 493.
[2] A. N. K. 1522 f. 49, Arch. Vat., Oct. 2, 14-157.

a persuasive advocate in the person of Louis of Nassau, brother of the Prince of Orange, the leader of the Dutch insurgents. The King showed him great favor and finally granted him a pension of twelve thousand francs a year,[1] explaining to the King of Spain that all this intimacy with him was only in order to persuade him to renounce his rebellious projects against his royal master. Early in the spring, events put a potent argument into the hands of this advocate of war against Spain.

When the invasion of the Netherlands by William of Orange proved a failure, resistance to Spain did not cease. In September, 1569, the fleet of the self-named "Beggars of the Sea" sailed from England: eighteen ships manned by two or three thousand Dutch refugees and some Huguenots under the flag of the Prince of Orange as a sovereign prince of the empire. At the same time a fleet of Huguenot privateers put to sea under letters of marque issued by the Cardinal Châtillon in England. The "Beggars of the Sea" met with extraordinary success. In four months they took three hundred vessels, and their forces, a strange mixture of pirates and patriots, became masters of the coast of the Netherlands. On the first of April, 1572, the fleet suddenly seized the fortified town of Brielle, threw into it a garrison of six hundred men and raised over it the flag of the Prince of Orange. A few days later the important town of Flushing, which contained a hundred cannon and considerable stores of munitions of war, also raised the flag of the Prince of Orange. This news seems to have decided the King to give the insurgents such underhand support as Elizabeth was already giving them. He wrote to the Prince of Orange that he was determined to use the forces God had given him to free the Netherlands from the oppression under which they groaned. He also began to form a fleet under the pretext of guarding his harbors from violence, but he wrote to his ambassador in Constantinople that his real intention

[1] Neg. Tosc., III, 755.

was to hold in check the King of Spain. Philip had too many spies at the French court not to be aware that something was going on against his interests, but Charles did all he could to allay suspicion and wrote such reassuring letters to the Duke of Alva that the not overtrusting Spaniard said they could not be doubted.[1]

It is evident, either that the King did not tell his mother what he was doing, or else that she disapproved of it, for she left court to spend several days at her neighboring château at Chenonceaux; which caused a great deal of gossip that the Queen Mother was about to lose her authority and that the King, in a short time, intended to govern for himself. Without regard to her opposition and anger, the King allowed Louis of Nassau to form secretly close to the French border a force of Huguenots and Dutch refugees, which suddenly seized the important cities of Mons and Valenciennes. This success seems to have strongly inclined the King in the direction of open war with Spain and he determined to summon Coligny to court. But to summon Coligny to court with the vendetta of Henry of Guise unappeased, was to evoke a civil war. Even when the Admiral was at his home in Châtillon, all danger of a rencounter was not over. At Christmas time Marshal Montmorency had told the King that a great many friends of Guise were gathering in Paris, holding secret assemblies at night, providing themselves with "short arms better fitted for use in rooms than on the streets." He believed they even talked of going to besiege the Admiral in his own house. If that happened he would feel obliged to go to the help of his relative. Coligny was even more defiant and wrote to the King that if his enemies marched against his château he would go out to meet them halfway. Catherine had sent a soothing message to Coligny, but Guise had written to the King demanding permission to settle his quarrel with Coligny man to

[1] Gachard, II, 269, Comp. 250, 251; Groen, IV, 10; Noailles, I, 9; D'Ars, 38.

man in the good old fashion his predecessors had allowed; "which had never brought trouble to France." [1]

In order to pave the way for the return to his Council of the man whose advice he wished to hear, the King now determined to force the close of this quarrel. He informed the Admiral in the end of May that he had reaffirmed the reservation of the charge of murdering the Duke of Guise to his own decision, which made it impossible for the case ever to be appealed to the ordinary courts and he somehow made Guise feel that he must respect the royal protection over the man he hated; though the King agreed that Guise was not to be obliged to show the Admiral any more courtesy than he wished to show. In consequence the Guise and the Admiral promised to come to court and to recognize the old accord made at Moulins in 1566. The King forbade, under very severe penalty, anybody from making any mention of the past trouble. On the 6th of June, 1572, therefore, the Admiral arrived, accompanied by three hundred horse, and two days later the young King of Navarre and the young Prince of Condé entered the city with a thousand horses in their train.[2]

We have less information than usual about what happened at court during the months of June and July, 1572. But we know that a struggle of which we have not the details was going on between the Admiral and Catherine to decide the King for peace or war with Spain. At the end of June the Spanish Ambassador reported to his master: "They have just been holding a great council upon the question of whether to declare war against Your Majesty or not. They have not come to any conclusion, but their very doubt is a proof that if they see a good chance they will take it and there is nothing for us to do but stand with the sword in our hand." Coligny made every effort to win

[1] Neg. Tosc., III, 743, 769, B. N. fds. fr. 3193 f. 25 ctd. Lettenhove (2) II, 340; B. N. It. 1727 f. 337; A. N. K. B. 11 f. 12.

[2] Neg. Tosc., III, 771, 784; A. N. K. ctd. Bouillé, II, 495; Bib. École des Chartres, 1862, p. 3; B. N. Dupuy, 519 f. 63, 64 ctd. Delaborde.

Catherine to his side, and they had several long private conferences.[1]

While the question of war or peace with Spain still hung in suspense, the Huguenot leader Genlis, who had gone with Louis of Nassau to capture Mons and Valenciennes, returned to Paris to ask aid. The Spaniards had rallied from their surprise, recaptured Valenciennes, and were pressing hard the siege of Mons. Coligny argued long with the King, and, with the help of Marshal Montmorency, who had just returned from his mission to England in the interest of the marriage, finally persuaded him to permit a levy of five thousand men among the Huguenots. At the same time, in order to conceal his action from Spain, the King issued a proclamation demanding that all his subjects who were in the besieged city of Mons should return at once to France. Genlis proved to be an unskilful general. He could not maintain discipline and in the middle of July his force was suddenly attacked by the Spaniards within a few miles of the walls of Mons and entirely routed. Most of the soldiers were killed by the peasants whom they had plundered, but a small number of them, including Genlis himself, were captured and reserved by the Spaniards for execution. They found on the prisoners documents which justified their worst suspicions of the real attitude of the French Crown. "I have," wrote one of them, "in my hands a letter from the King of France, which would strike you with amazement if you could see it. I have never seen anything like it in my life." [2]

Before the news of this disaster reached Paris, things had seemed to be going Coligny's way. His policy was backed not only by the Politiques, but by several great lords of the straight-out Catholic party who, in spite of their personal hostility to him, wanted war. The Guise were

[1] Neg. Tosc., III, 785; A. N. K. 1529 f. 98; Sp. Amb. to Alva, 1 July, 1572.

[2] A. N. K. 1529 f. 13-18; Cal. F. 1572, p. 145; Gachard, II, 269.

so much out of favor with the King that their opposition counted for almost nothing, and the Cardinal of Lorraine, the ablest diplomatist of the family, was at Rome. The royal council had indeed decided against war, but the extraordinary intimacy of the King with Coligny showed the influence which the Admiral exercised over the mind of the young man. And this continued in spite of the disaster to Genlis. Early in August, by command of the King, the Admiral was shut up with the four royal secretaries from eleven at night until two in the morning.[1]

Just at this critical moment Catherine was called from court to visit her eldest daughter, the Duchess of Lorraine, who had been taken seriously ill on a journey to be present at her sister's marriage. She was recalled in great haste to stop this apparent drift towards open war. Taking as her text a report she had received from England that Elizabeth intended to recall from the Netherlands the English volunteers hitherto openly reproved but secretly permitted, like the Huguenots who had followed Genlis, she expressed her fears that war against Spain would certainly miscarry without the assistance of England. "With tears" she dissuaded the King for the time, "who otherwise was very resolute" (August 10th, 1572). The Spanish Ambassador wrote to his master that, although he had been in some doubt before, he was now certain that Catherine was the principal force preventing a declaration of war, and that she was taking this stand, not so much for the good of her son or of Christendom, but for her own particular interest, because she would lose her control of the government in case war was decided upon. Having thus checked for the time the Admiral's attempt to sweep the King into war during her absence, Catherine was able to hold her advantage. She came out of the council in which Coligny had offered to raise twenty thousand Huguenot volunteers and told her confidant, Gondi, who repeated the remark to the Spanish

[1] Arch. Vat., 21 July, 1572, ib. Aug. 5, f. 92.

Ambassador, that she was very much offended to find herself in council with a great party of her enemies, but at last she had succeeded in getting what she wanted because it was definitely decided to have no war with Spain.[1]

[1] Digges, 233; Rel. I, 4, pp. 283, 326; A. N. K. 1530 f. 7, 15, 71.

CHAPTER XXVII

CATHERINE AND ST. BARTHOLOMEW

Catherine was now actively engaged not only in stopping war but also in getting over an obstacle which still prevented the marriage of the King of Navarre and the Princess Margaret. The Pope had resolutely refused to grant the dispensation which alone could render it legal and the Cardinal of Bourbon, who had been chosen to marry the couple, refused to do it without the papal dispensation. She finally succeeded in removing his scruples by showing a letter from the French Ambassador at Rome informing her that the Pope had at last granted a dispensation which would remove all the doubts of the Cardinal of Bourbon and that it would be forwarded at once from Rome by an extraordinary courier. This letter told a falsehood and in order to prevent any possibility of the trick being discovered, she wrote to Mandelot, governor of Lyons, to allow no courier coming from Rome to pass, until after the following Monday, and to take good care that none of them slipped through by getting secretly to the nearest post station and then posting from thence to Paris. She added that he was to carry out these instructions without letting anybody know that he had received an order to do so.[1]

The marriage was celebrated August 18th, 1572, with that sumptuous luxury usual at the French court, which in the midst of the poverty caused by the civil wars, had already aroused very bitter comment. The King and his brothers, the Dukes of Anjou and Alençon, the King of Navarre and his cousin the Prince of Condé, wore, in sign of lasting amity, similar suits of pale yellow satin em-

[1] De Thou, IV, 569; Letts. IV, 109.

broidered in high relief in silver set with pearls. The Princess Margaret, led by her brother and followed by Catherine, the queen regent, the bride's sister, the Duchess of Lorraine, and all the ladies of the court dressed in cloth of gold and silver, walked along a high wooden gallery built from the episcopal palace on to a platform erected in front of the great gate of Notre Dame. The bride wore violet velvet with a royal mantle, and carried upon her head a magnificent tiara of large pearls mingled with diamonds, rubies and other precious stones. The King of Navarre met her on the platform and the espousal was there performed by his uncle, the Cardinal of Bourbon. When that ceremony was concluded, the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé and all the Reformed gentlemen of their suite retired and his wife entered the church to hear mass at the high altar.[1]

The future historian, de Thou, then quite a young man, was present at the ceremony and, anxious to see the celebrated Admiral, he edged as near to him as he could. He heard Coligny make a remark which showed he had not, in spite of the decision of the royal council, given up the hope of persuading the King to make war against Spain. "I saw him point out to Marshal Damville the captured banners from the royal victories in the last civil war of Jarnac and Moncontour, saying: 'In a little while we shall take down those banners and put others in their place more pleasant to look at.'" The marriage was followed by a magnificent ball, and one of those elaborate masques in which the Valois court took such delight. The King had a medal struck as a wedding souvenir bearing these inscriptions: "I announce to you peace," and the obverse, "Discord bound by this bond." [2]

The Admiral's satisfaction was indeed not unclouded. He had been repeatedly warned that his life was in danger at Paris. To all these remonstrances he replied that he

[1] Journal, 129; Goulart, I, 163.
[2] De Thou (2), 568; Ebeling, 102, pntd.

trusted the King and that "he'd rather have his dead body dragged through the streets than reopen the civil war." One of the most violent of these remonstrances attacked the King as a "blasphemer, a corrupter of women, double faced, trained from childhood to take pleasure in seeing animals torn in pieces, a faithful disciple of his master Machiavelli." "He and his mother have planned to take all the Huguenots like fishes in a net and if you're wise you'll leave the court which is nothing but an infected sewer." [1] The Admiral read this letter with extreme indignation, but took the pains to answer it, pointing out the reasons for his hopes of being allowed to attack Spain in Flanders, repeating that he was persuaded of the good faith of the Guise and begging his friends not to importune him any more. His confidence was misplaced. It was just these hopes of persuading the King to attack Spain which were to be fatal to him. An enemy far more dangerous than the Guise was roused by them—Catherine de Médicis.

On the fourth day after the marriage ceremony, the Admiral attended the meeting of the royal council, which closed about half past ten in the morning. He stood for a while to watch his son-in-law Téligny, the King and the Duke of Guise playing tennis and then, followed by some dozen of his gentlemen, started home. He had not gone very far, when a harquebus was fired at him from the barred window of a house. The ball smashed his right forefinger and passed through his left arm from the wrist to the elbow. He remained perfectly calm and pointed out to his excited followers the smoke curling from the window whence the shot had come. They attacked the house, but the assassin, running out through the back, leaped upon a horse which was standing all ready for him and galloped through the streets into the open country. Word was immediately brought to the King, who had not finished his game of tennis. He threw down his racquet in anger, crying, "Shall I never have peace?" and went at once to his room. There is

[1] De Thou, IV, 567.

no reason to suspect the King of this attempt at murder and there are just two other sources from which the deed would in any likelihood come.

The general belief that Coligny had procured the murder of his father, was for Henry of Guise not only the reminder of an injury, but the monument of an insult. The average gentleman of the time thought that the man who made no effort to avenge such a wrong was sullying his honor. To the Frenchman the proper outcome of such a situation was that which Guise had already suggested to the King, a duel man to man. In this matter there was, however, a sharp conflict between the sense of honor and the law. The clergy and the Third Estate in the Estates General of Orleans, had asked that duelling should be punished by death and their request had been granted in a royal ordinance. Wherever the law was enforced, the French nobility and gentry substituted for the duel something equivalent to that mutual understanding for killing at sight which up to recently has been condoned by public opinion in some parts of the southern and western United States. This method of avenging his father and clearing what he thought the stain upon his own honor by an open attack upon Coligny, guarded by the mass of the Huguenot gentry and under the explicit protection of the King, was not open to Henry of Guise.

But there was another method of clearing his honor by executing the duty of vengeance, which, in Italy of that time, had all but supplanted the duel; the use of hired assassins or bravi. The employment of these bravi for clearing personal honor in vendettas, although it was condemned in the most severe terms by the Church and punished in many of the states, notably Venice, by terrible laws, was in Italy almost a recognized social institution, and we have already seen (Vol. I, p. 291) that it was spreading to France. Just at this time the young Duke (twenty-one) was in very close association and conference with two Italian women who both had cause to hate the Admiral; his mother, a daughter of the Duke of Ferrara, and Catherine de Médicis.

It is difficult to see who else under the circumstances would have wanted to kill the Admiral except the family of Guise and how they would have dared to do it unless they had the support of the Queen Mother. Coligny himself believed that "Guise and another" had caused the shot to be fired. Some days later the Nuncio reported that the murder was the result of the jealousy of the Queen Mother of Coligny's influence over her son; she had plotted with the widow of the late Duke of Guise, now the Duchess of Nemours, to kill him. The young Duke had urged his mother to shoot the Admiral herself some day while he was talking to Catherine and showed her how easy it was to fire a harquebus. Finally the murder had been done by a hired assassin with the knowledge of the Duke of Anjou, but not of the King. The Venetian Ambassador agrees with this view of the crime, except that he lays no emphasis on the share of the Guise in the deed, and a Venetian envoy-extraordinary who was in Paris at this time says the murder was planned by Catherine and the Duke of Anjou. The bride, whose "wedding favors were so red," has recorded in her confused but vivid recollections of the terrible thirty-six hours which followed the harquebus shot, the accepted belief in the palace that Maurevel had fired it at the instigation of Guise, her mother and her second brother Anjou. It is significant that, eighteen months before, when the Spanish Ambassador congratulated Catherine on the death of the Regent Murray of Scotland, who was "shot from a window while going with his guards through the street," she answered, "she hoped to see another man whom I knew die the same way." [1]

Coligny was just Catherine's age, and she must have known him ever since she had arrived in France, for his mother was lady-in-waiting to the queen when she came to court as a girl bride. The lad was then head of the rich

[1] Arch. Vat. Francia, I, 5 Sept., 2; A. N. K. 1530, Aug. 22; Rel. I, 4, pp. 295, 327. One of the German princes. Margaret, 28, A. N. K. 1515 f. 47.

house of Châtillon and a few years later he became known among the court factions as a partisan of her husband. When Coligny made the Italian tour at the age of twenty-seven, Catherine, then Dauphiness, had given him letters of introduction to her Italian friends. When her husband died, Coligny remained Catherine's friend and it was partly by his help that she had taken the helm of the ship of state for a time out of the hands of the Cardinal of Lorraine after the conspiracy of Amboise in 1560. After the accession of her second son, the boy Charles IX, Coligny had helped her more than any one man to defend her usurpation of the regency and escape from the domination of the Guise, whose power she feared and disliked more than that of any one else except her son-in-law, Philip of Spain. For it was Coligny who broke the plan to relegate Catherine to the position of mere guardian of the young King by inducing the Estates General of Pontoise to confirm her in the regency, and she had frequently used his advice and help in the interval between the first and second Huguenot wars. The mere fact that he had become a heretic and a leader in the civil wars did not affect her much. No one of her times was less of a fanatic in religion than she was, and for Condé, the titular head of the Huguenots, she had a distinct liking: not indeed the *tendresse* which the zealots of the Paris streets gossiped about with foul tongues—for Catherine never had a woman's passion for any one except her husband—but a sort of easy liking. For Condé's strongest qualities did not make him essentially different from other men around her. He was witty, vivacious, brave with a limitless courage, impulsive, easily led astray by women. She felt she could manage him. But time had developed the gorgeous young courtier Coligny into a man of iron, impervious to blandishments or the most skilful flattery. He was indeed no puritan ascetic, for he was always the great French noble, a lover of stately life who enlarged and adorned the magnificent château of his ancestors. But he had the stern temper of a soldier trained in the rough school

of his uncle, the Constable, and of late years his tough will had been still further hardened by the sincere conviction [1] that he was called of God to do certain work in the world. He had no common vices and no ordinary human weaknesses to play upon and, as Catherine had realized more and more that here was a man she could do nothing with, a certain unemotional hatred had gradually joined fear in her heart.

The idea of putting to death Coligny and a few Huguenot chiefs by sudden arrest and trial for treason, had been pressed upon her again and again from Rome and Spain and by some of the ultra Catholics like Nevers, Montpensier and Monluc. For years she had steadily rejected it and stood by her moderate, middle-of-the-road policy; though she had been willing to gain help in her plans for marrying her children by occasional hints that she might be willing to adopt the suggestion. After the Huguenot attempt to seize the royal family at Meaux, she determined to carry it out. But the abortive plot to seize Coligny and Condé at Noyers (August, 1568) only renewed the civil war. She had put a price on his head in the war and since the peace the idea of killing him without the formality of trial had been urged upon her by two who stood close to her. The Duchess of Nemours kept begging for vengeance on the man she thought the assassin of her first husband. Besides this the poisonous envy of Catherine's third son, Henry of Anjou, who had insulted the dead body of Condé because he had dared to rival him in demanding the lieutenant-generalship, was now fixed on Coligny with the intensity of an angered cobra. He wanted him killed "because he had played the King." Beyond all this Coligny, who had become the "most famous subject in the world," [2] threatened to come between Catherine and her oldest son, close his ears to her counsels, lead him to brush aside all her fine spun diplomacy

[1] Coligny was the one Huguenot noble whose zealous sincerity was admitted even by enemies like a Nuncio or a Venetian Ambassador.

[2] Pasquier, II, 369, Ranke.

and step out in a bold straight-forward policy, which she believed would bring the Medici-Valois she had made so great, to ruin. With a calculated hate she loosed the passionate vengeance of young Guise and his mother.

The circumstantial evidence in support of the opinion of all those who had the best means of knowing the facts that the Duke of Guise was her instrument, is overwhelming. The poor lodging from whose window the shot was fired was occupied by a former tutor of the Duke of Guise, who was absent. The Admiral's friends, when they got in, found only a maid, a lackey and a harquebus. The servants said a man had been brought to them by the Seigneur du Chailly (an adherent of the Guise), "a sort of soldier." They were told he was an intimate friend of the absent master of the lodging. When they had asked him for his name, he had given to one Bolland and to the other Bondol. The lackey deposed that, on the morning the shot was fired, the strange lodger had sent him to Mr. du Chailly to tell him to have the horses ready. The names of three men have been mentioned by contemporaries as firing the shot, but the French witnesses who had the best chance to know about it, are unanimous that it was Maurevel, who had been hid in various houses of the Duke of Guise ever since he had shot de Mouy and gained the sobriquet, because he drew a pension from the King, of "the King's killer." The conviction that he was the assassin was so widespread and so fixed that, when he afterwards joined the royal army at the siege of La Rochelle, no colonel would receive him in his regiment and nobody would share guard duty with him, holding him for a dishonored man who had committed traitorous and unworthy acts.[1]

About four hours after the attempt, the King, at the suggestion of the Admiral's son-in-law and his cousin, Marshal Damville, went, accompanied by his mother and brothers, the Marshals and two of Coligny's cousins, the

[1] De Thou, 576. His father examined the witnesses. Brant., Bouillon, 386.

younger members of the House of Montmorency, to visit the wounded man in his lodgings. The King spoke to him with the utmost kindness, promised to appoint a commission to inquire into the murder and asked the Admiral whom he should appoint upon it. He wished to carry him to the Louvre, where he would be watched by the royal guards, but the surgeons refused to let him be moved. The King of Navarre sent five of his Swiss guards to the Admiral's lodgings and the Huguenot chiefs meeting in the house discussed the advisability of withdrawing from Paris and carrying him with them. This project was defeated by the influence of Téligny, the Admiral's son-in-law, and the minister Merlin, who doubtless spoke for him in expressing their entire confidence in the King. His friends were not all so self-restrained. All night long the room of the newly married couple was filled with angry Huguenot nobles who discussed their demand for justice on the Duke of Guise, and swore if they did not get it from the King they would execute it themselves.[1]

This mood alarmed and angered Catherine. She hoped at first they would believe the Duke of Alva was the assassin, but by the next evening she had made up her mind that the only way to cover up her tracks was to induce the King to issue an order to kill them all. The young bride, suspected by the Huguenots because she was a Catholic, and suspected by the Catholics because she was the wife of Henry of Navarre, felt the tension in the air and the shadow of coming danger, although no one had spoken a word to her. In the evening she was seated upon a chest beside her sister, the Duchess of Lorraine, in the room of her mother. Her mother told her sharply to go to bed. As she made her reverence before leaving the room, her sister seized her by the arm and "bursting into tears, said, 'My God, sister, don't go,' which frightened me terribly. My mother called my sister and scolded her sharply, telling her not to say a word." Margaret lingered at the door, seeing that there

[1] Margaret, 32.

was a discussion between them, but not able to hear what they said. Finally the Queen harshly commanded her to go to bed, and her sister, bursting again into tears, said good-night to her without another word. She went to her room and prayed God to protect her, not knowing from what or from whom. The deadly contest between the Admiral and Catherine for the control of her son had reached its climax. Margaret says that between nine and ten o'clock her mother had determined to tell Charles the truth, and she sent her satellite Marshal de Retz to tell him that she and his brother were behind the attempt upon the Admiral; that her first intention had been simply to take that pest out of the kingdom, the Admiral alone, but since bad luck would have it that Maurevel missed his shot, the Huguenots now charged it not only to the Duke of Guise, but to her and his brother. They had now come to believe that the King had consented to it and were determined to take up arms the same night. Later Catherine went to the King's room herself and succeeded in persuading him to order his guards, under the direction of the Dukes of Guise and Aumale, to kill all the Huguenot chiefs. The mob of Paris was also to be loosed on all the Huguenots in the city under the leadership of some of the captains of the city militia—a task to which they were to be summoned by the ringing of the tocsin. Margaret's supposition that the King's reluctance was finally overcome because he was told that the Huguenots intended to rise in arms, although accepted by the majority of historians until very recent times, is mistaken. The King used the story of the Huguenot rising in a later message to the city council, but his early correspondence about the massacre suggests very strongly that he did not believe it.

Sagacious observers afterwards expressed the opinion that if Coligny had been killed by the balls of the harquebus, the massacre would not have taken place. But, now that Coligny was recovering, Catherine found herself in terrible danger. The royal commission might at any moment suc-

ceed in arresting du Chailly or the old tutor of Guise. The rack would make them talk. Guise would surely not shoulder the responsibility alone, but share it with her and her younger son. If she did not act quickly she was face to face with ruin.

It is not possible to be quite certain about all who shared in the dark and bloody councils of that night, or just how they succeeded in rousing that violent morbid temper of the young King of which he was himself afraid. Catherine had been inseparable from him for eleven years and knew how to play on his neurotic temperament. Seven witnesses who were in Paris at the time [1] agreed that his mother and oldest brother, the Duke of Anjou, were the chief agents in persuading Charles IX to consent to the ugliest deed that stains the history of any modern European nation. There were not many people at court with whom Catherine would dare to discuss such a plan. As we have already seen, she could not trust her younger daughter. Her youngest son, the Duke of Alençon, the suitor of Elizabeth, was a great friend of the Montmorencies and had so many heretics in his service that he was called the "Refuge of the Huguenots." [2] She did not dare of course to trust any Politique, and their faction included four of the six marshals of France. There was no prince of the blood that she could have trusted with such a plan, except the Duke of Montpensier, and the fact that two of those who knew all that an outsider could find out about the councils of that night say that he was present, is perhaps only a guess on their part. It is certain that Marshal Tavannes, the Duke of Guise and the Duke of Nevers were present and with them there were de Retz and Birague, both Italians and personal adherents of Catherine, the last recently made keeper of the seal.

How little religious fanaticism had to do with planning this great treachery is evident from the fact that the higher

[1] See Note.
[2] Cal. F., 1572, p. 12.

clergy were not active in it. Two of the contemporary reporters do indeed say that Morvillier was called in at the end of the discussion, but even if this were true, it does not involve the clergy, for Morvillier, who was President of the Council in the absence of the King, had resigned his bishopric of Orleans some years before in order to devote himself more completely to the business of state. He had so little zeal that the Spanish Ambassador reputed him as a heretic (see page 62). In addition, the only two witnesses who report his presence, add that he opposed the decision and when it was finally made, burst into tears.[1]

As for her upon whom the chief responsibility for the deed must always rest, no one who knows anything of the character of Catherine de Médicis through her letters, or who has carefully studied the whole of her tortuous state policy, could suspect for one moment that there was in her anything resembling religious fanaticism. Her letters of a more intimate sort are, as we have seen, filled with pious phrases and the person who thinks it necessary to judge them consciously insincere will never understand the typical personalities produced by the Italian Renascence. But it would be impossible to decide from the many pious passages of Catherine's letters whether the form of her religion was Catholic or Protestant.[2] Such letters as the one which the ex-inquisitor Pope Pius V wrote in 1572 about "men corrupted by heresy who crawl out of their hiding places like venomous vipers and spread their poison until it infects people with their pestilential opinions by discourses which enter and eat deeply like the gangrene," never stirred the slightest echo in her heart. Catherine claimed afterwards that the deed had been done for the glory of God and the honor of the Church and applied to it the words of Christ to the disciples of John the Baptist, for she wanted all the credit she could get from the ultra-orthodox; but perhaps

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 816, 829.

[2] Also true of the hymns of Lorenzo de' Medicis and the sonnets of Michel Angelo. Burckhardt, 484.

the only sincere phrase in the whole complicated web of lies that she wove around the deed afterwards in her correspondence, is that passage in one of her letters to Elizabeth where she suggests that the Queen of England ought not to mind her execution of Huguenots who endangered the state, any more than she would mind it if the Queen of England did execution against those who troubled her, "even if they should be all the Catholics of England." [1]

It is impossible to draw an exact and ordered picture of those terrible hours when murder spread with the dawn from the palace through the slums of the city, until the corpses of the King's wedding guests lay piled in front of his door and as an observer wrote "blood ran down the gutters like water after a heavy rain." But it is possible roughly to divide the killings into two classes: first, the killing of the Huguenot chiefs who would be dangerous if they escaped. The greater part of these were lodged in the palace or close by around the house of the Admiral. This part of the massacre was explicitly committed to the care of the Duke of Guise and the King's bastard brother, with their own personal servitors, aided by detachments of the royal guard. The killers actually engaged in it were French guards, aided by Italian or German mercenaries. The few fugitives from their list who escaped were carefully hunted down afterwards under the orders of Catherine and the King. They would have made a clean sweep and got all the men who had led the Huguenot armies, if the Vidame of Chartres and the Count of Montgomery had not persisted, after their vain attempt to persuade their friends to carry the wounded Admiral out of the city, in going to lodgings on the other bank of the Seine. At five o'clock in the morning a fugitive swam the river and warned them. They mounted and fled. They were too dangerous to be allowed to get away and, by the King's express orders, Guise followed them until his horses were exhausted. Meantime the second class of killings was going on and it lasted sporadically

[1] Potter, 128, pntd. La Mothe, VII, 349.

for three days. The mob of Paris rose and killed every living creature suspected of heresy upon whom they could lay their hands. There had been no intention of putting to death the wives of the leading Huguenots, and later Catherine even sent her own coach to take Huguenot ladies to places of safety, but the mob butchered men, women and children indiscriminately. A glance at specimens of each of these sorts of killings will give us some sort of idea of the terrible flood of slaughter for which Catherine lifted the gate.[1]

The new Queen of Navarre was wakened by some one hammering on the door with hands and feet, screaming "Navarre! Navarre!" and a wounded gentleman covered with blood dashed into the chamber, hotly pursued by four archers of the royal guard. He threw himself on Margaret's bed, grasping her in his arms and both screamed with terror. The archers dared not strike him for fear of wounding the Queen; their captain finally arrived and sent them out of the room, leaving the Queen covered with blood but the victim safe, and she kept him in her rooms until he had a chance to escape. The captain told her that her husband was in the room of the King, bade her throw on a dressing gown and led her to the room of her sister, the Duchess of Lorraine. As she passed through the antechamber she saw a gentleman she knew running with soldiers behind him and he fell, thrust through and through with a hallebarde not three steps from her. "I fell fainting into the arms of the captain of the guard, because I thought that the blow would transfix both of us." [2]

Coligny was the first man killed. The Duke of Guise and the bastard brother of the King waited in the courtyard of the house while three officers of the royal guard, accompanied by an Italian and a German servitor of the House of Guise, with a handful of men, broke down the door and,

[1] Arch. Mod., Aug. 24, Vol. III; Bull. Soc. Prot., Vol. 22, p. 378; Rel. I, 4, p. 298.
[2] Margaret.

shooting one of Navarre's Swiss guards who tried to bar the stairs, forced their way into the Admiral's room. He met his fate with the calmness which might be expected from a man of his iron will and sincere religion. When the assassins called down through the open window to those in the court below that their work was done, the Duke of Guise answered, "The Count of Angoulême will not believe he is dead unless he sees it with his own eyes," so they threw the body through the window and the Count stooped down and wiped the blood off the face in order to be sure that it was the Admiral. The story that Guise kicked the dead body of his foe, which has passed into almost all histories, appears only in an account of the massacre printed and circulated in the Netherlands by the Duke of Alva, and it was put in the story apparently with the idea that it added an additional shame to the Admiral's end. There is no reason to believe it.

After the Admiral, the most distinguished of the Huguenot leaders outside the royal family was, perhaps, the Count de la Rochefoucauld. The charm of his manners made the King very fond of him. He stayed late in the King's room, and then left, refusing an invitation to spend the night. In the early morning somebody knocked on his door, calling out that he had a message from the King. La Rochefoucauld himself ordered it to be opened and when a band of masked men entered, he supposed that the King was among them, playing one of the practical jokes of which he was so fond. With affected terror he begged his visitors not to be too hard on him and woke from his deception in the agonies of death. The gentlemen of the King of Navarre were ordered by the King to come down from their rooms into the court of the palace. As soon as they arrived there their swords and daggers were taken from them and they were told to leave. Some were poignarded in the vestibule. Others were killed by the royal guards as they stepped from the gates into the street.[1]

After the Admiral had been killed and they had made

[1] De Thou.

sure of the chief Huguenots, they roused the mob by sounding the tocsin from the tower of St. Germain l'Auxerrois close by the palace. There had been many periods during the last ten years when it was enough for a street urchin to call out, "There goes a Huguenot" to cause the death of any strange passer-by. But to make sure that this ignorant fanatic hatred did its work now, the Duke of Nevers, the Marshal Tavannes, and the Duke of Montpensier ran through the streets, "sword in hand," calling on the people to make an end of all the King's enemies. For the details of its cruel work, the mob found other leaders, like Pezou, a butcher, who was captain in the city militia, and Cruce, a watch-maker. De Thou says he often saw this man and always looked on him with horror because of "his true gallows face and his habit of insolently boasting, holding up his bare arms, that he had killed four hundred men that day." Later in life he pretended to turn hermit, but became the leader of a band who killed and robbed travellers in his hermitage. Under the lead of men like these, bands of licensed murderers roamed through the streets for three days, plundering, burning and killing. They met, for instance, a noble lady disguised in a nun's robe. Her shoes of crimson velvet betrayed her, and after stabbing her several times they threw her half dead into the river. The current bore her off, but she did not sink at once and some boatmen, seeing that she still lived, followed her as if she were a drowning rat, striking at her again and again, until she sank.[1]

Pierre de la Place, President of le Cour des Aides, having paid a heavy ransom, was protected in his house for some days by the provost of the merchants of Paris. The provost finally compelled him to go out, saying he had the express command of the King to take him to prison. At the street corner he was met by an assassin, who struck him out of the saddle of his mule with repeated blows of his dagger, while

[1] Cal. F., 1562, pp. 17, 76, 194, 212, 464; 1563, pp. 78, 101, 105, 340, 408, 411; Journal, 238; de Thou, 586, 592, 593; d'Aubigné, III, 329, 331.

the archers of the escort looked on in silence. A bookbinder was roasted to death on a heap of his own books in front of his house. The river was the easiest way to dispose of the corpses. There was a certain street called the Valley of Misery which ended on the bank of the river, where it was closed by a door painted red. That door, as the four leading murderers whose names have survived, boasted, became the gate of death for over six hundred Huguenots. A citizen of Strasburg saw a beautiful woman stripped naked standing on the bridge near this gate and then thrown into the river. Two miserable women clung for a long time to piles, but were finally beaten down by stones thrown upon them from the arch above.[1]

It is no wonder from the authentic anecdotes of cruelty that have come down to us that a Swiss Roman Catholic preacher who was in Paris wrote to a friend, "I trembled at the sight of the river full of corpses naked and horribly disfigured." The killers spared age no more than sex. Anne de Terrieres, one of the leading lawyers of Paris, a man over eighty years old, was killed. Brion, the governor of the little Prince of Conti, a man over eighty, with hair as white as snow, was poignarded with the little prince clinging around his neck and trying to ward off the blows with his tiny hands. We have the names of nineteen children killed in Paris and doubtless there were many more. Huguenot sources tell stories of two little girls who hid under the bed and were dragged out and killed, of infants who, when their murderers took them up, laughed and played with their beards, and of boys of ten dragging an infant in long clothes through the streets on the end of a string in order to drown it in the river.[2]

During these days when the law was suspended by orders of him who was the fountain of justice, "bloody hate and savage greed found tools ready to their hand." A num-

[1] Arch. C., VII, 140, 143, 146; d'Aubigné, III, 142.
[2] Bull. Soc. Prot., VIII, 287; de Thou, IV, 592; d'Aubigné, III, 323.

ber of Catholics perished, several heirs at law came prematurely into their inheritance and some lawsuits were settled in favor of the less scrupulous of the parties. Among the victims of personal hatred, the most distinguished was the celebrated Ramus (Pierre la Ramée), one of the glories of French letters and learning. Ramus, as a professed advocate of the New Learning and a reformer of education, had a long conflict with Jacques Charpentier, a doctor in medicine who had bought from a Sicilian who was professor of mathematics in the College of France, the succession to his chair. Ramus had obtained from the King a rule that everybody who was installed in a chair at the College of France should be examined in his subjects by the other professors, and he insisted upon the application of the rule in this case. Charpentier resisted it and said before the committee that, "even if he was not capable of teaching mathematics, he had knowledge of a large number of other subjects upon which he could deliver public lectures to the contentment of everyone who heard him." He admitted in a signed statement that he did not know any mathematics and could not read his Euclid in the original Greek, but added that "he considered mathematics only play for children which, in comparison to metaphysics, seemed to him like dirt in which only a pig like Ramus could find contentment." In spite of these facts, which seemed to limit his usefulness as professor of mathematics, the commission of the Parlement, "in consideration of his great services to the Catholic religion and in the teaching of Aristotle," decided, since he offered to prepare himself fully to lecture upon mathematics inside of three months, to install him provisionally in his chair. On the third day of the massacre, after the King had ordered that pillaging and killing should be stopped, Charpentier, who had brooded in his soul for six long years "an Italian vengeance," sent a band of hired assassins, who, after inflicting upon Ramus mortal wounds, hurled him through the window of his lofty study into the

court of the college, where his body was mutilated and then dragged through the streets and thrown into the river.[1]

The massacre spread slowly to other cities of France, but it was neither simultaneous nor general; showing that it had not been planned beforehand. It was generally carried out, not by soldiers but by mobs, sometimes plainly instigated by the magistrates, at others evidently with their connivance. For instance, it lies on the face of the facts of the killing at Lyons that an able governor like Mandelot could have prevented or punished most of the four hundred murders and there was no attempt to use the garrison of Orleans to prevent such a slaughter that people would not eat fish for fear they had fed on the bodies thrown into the river.[2]

Documentary evidence has survived that the Duke of Anjou arranged for massacres in two of the principal cities of his duchy through the medium of one of the gentlemen of his suite. A letter of the King sent out six days after the massacre at Paris, calling attention of the governors of cities to his proclamation that peaceable Protestants will not be molested, says at the close, "whatever verbal commands I may have given to those whom I sent to you or to my other governors and lieutenant-generals, are now completely revoked, intending that nothing therein contained should be put into execution by you or by others." There can be little doubt that the verbal instructions referred to were instructions to imitate the action at Paris. By massacres which took place in some instances three or four weeks after St. Bartholomew's day, great numbers of Huguenots were put to death in Meaux, Troyes, Orleans, Bourges, Angers, Saumur, Lyons, Rouen, Toulouse, Bordeaux and other cities. In more than half of the thirteen provinces of France there were no disorders. Picardy, Dauphiny, Provence, Languedoc, had, indeed, Politiques for governors, who would never have permitted such a slaughter of the Huguenots, but Champagne and Burgundy, where there

[1] Waddington, 174-178; Pasquier (1), Bk. IX, Ch. 20.
[2] Bull. Soc. Prot., Vol. 21, p. 390.

were no murders, were under the rule of Guise and his uncle, the Duke of Aumale. Auvergne, which was almost free from slaughter, had for its governor the head of a very strong Catholic family and Lower Normandy was kept calm under the rule of Matignon, in whom Catherine confided more than in any of the governors of provinces.[1]

The governor of Brittany was the Duke of Montpensier, the only one of the few great nobles mentioned prominently in connection with the massacre who may be suspected of acting out of religious zeal. He wrote to the Mayor and councillors of his chief city, Nantes, that the King, "because of a conspiracy to kill the entire royal family and all the Catholics of the court, had killed all the Huguenot chiefs at Paris: by which the views of His Majesty in regard to the treatment which ought to be accorded to the Huguenots of other cities are made sufficiently plain." On receipt of this invitation to massacre, the city council met, took a solemn oath not to break the Edict of Pacification and forbade all violence against the Huguenots. The magistrates and people of the other cities of the province followed this example and in Brittany there was no killing. In Xaintonge and Poitou there was no bloodshed and none is mentioned in Maine. So that eleven out of sixteen political divisions of France, including six out of the seven provinces which had the greatest local autonomy, were free from this slaughter. It is reported that the Bishop of Lisieux answered messages from Paris that he was the shepherd and not the butcher of his flock and the governor of the Spanish March at Bayonne is supposed to have written to the King that he had many brave soldiers under his command, but not one executioner. These *beaux gestes* are not authentic, but they record in legendary form the fact that France as a whole did not follow the bloody treachery of her King and that many Frenchmen in authority refused to obey dark hints and even secret orders from Paris.[2]

[1] Bull. Soc. Prot., Vol. 11, pp. 120-124, Paris, pntd. 53, Chardon.

[2] Vaugirard, 191-194; d'Aubigné, III, 350; Bull. Soc. Prot., VI, 466; Revue de Gascogne, 1882, p. 453.

It is hard to reckon the number who perished in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The estimates of twenty-seven contemporary reporters and modern historians range all the way from three thousand to one hundred and ten thousand victims. Probably between three or four thousand perished at Paris and perhaps as many more in the rest of France.[1] This was approximately double the number who perished at Paris in the great Armagnac massacre one hundred and fifty years earlier when the governmental authorities let loose the fury of the Parisian populace against their political enemies in very much the same way. The motive of the mob in Saint Bartholomew, however, was not political. It was the same religious fanaticism which had produced similar smaller massacres in many French cities during the previous ten or twelve years. It was idle for Catherine to say as she did, that she was responsible only for a few deaths. She knew by experience what the loosing of that incredibly bitter hatred meant.

[1] "No evidence takes us as high as 8,000."—Lord Acton, *Lectures, etc.*

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE WEB OF LIES. THE WORLD'S OPINIONS

The news was an astonishment to the entire world. The attitude of those who heard it varied from bitter indignation to intense joy, and the place of any given auditor in the scale of emotion was on the whole, though not universally or entirely, determined by his sympathies in the great conflict of which the massacre was a bloody episode. The Senate of Venice voted a congratulatory message by a majority of a hundred and sixty-one to one. The Duke of Tuscany wrote congratulatory letters to which Catherine replied, expressing the great pleasure which her son had in seeing himself praised by good and virtuous people for so holy a resolution as the execution of the Admiral and his adherents; from which "she hopes to draw by the grace of God the fruit necessary for the restoration of His Church and the repose of all Christendom." Philip of Spain wrote to Catherine that the punishment "given to the Admiral and his sect was indeed of such value and prudence and of such service, glory and honor to God and universal benefit to all Christendom that to hear of it was for me the best and most cheerful news which at present could come to me." When the Pope received from his Nuncio a dispatch describing the massacre, he assembled all the cardinals in the palace and read it to them, after which they went to the neighboring church to chant the Te Deum. It was ordered that the city should be illuminated for three nights in succession. Later the Pope ordered a medal to be struck in honor of the event and sent to Florence for one of the most distinguished painters of the day to decorate the walls of the Vatican with pictures recording it. The traces of

these pictures still remain upon the walls and, in the words of a modern Roman Catholic historian, "for three centuries they insulted every pontiff who went into the Sistine Chapel." In the Protestant world the condemnation was instant and overwhelming, with the exception of some of the Lutheran theologians, who thought that this punishment had fallen upon the Calvinists because of their errors in regard to the sacrament.[1]

To the man of our day, whether he be Catholic or Protestant, an attitude of complaisance towards such a deed is so abhorrent, that when it is taken by dead people whom he is inclined to respect, he instinctively and half unconsciously falls back upon denying or obscuring or overlooking the facts. When this refuge is finally taken away from him by the hard work of people to whom history means just judgment and not apology, he is inclined to believe that the religion of those who approved such manifest evil doing was either insincere or altogether perverted. But in this conclusion he fails to take account of the pressure in the direction of perverting the moral judgment exerted by long standing error expressed in law and custom inherited from many generations. The degree of moral turpitude of an ancient Spartan who thrust his sickly new-born infant out into the winter's storm to die, or of the Hindu noble who burnt his brother's widows on the funeral pile, is not so easy a matter to estimate as it may seem at first sight. The man of the sixteenth century had inherited an old and very pernicious doctrine, plainly taught by all the moral authorities he regarded with reverence and definitely expressed in laws. At the time of the massacre of St. Bartholomew the laws of all European countries, Protestant and Orthodox alike, punished heresy with death. The only difference between them was in the definition of heresy and a greater or less willingness to apply the laws strictly. These laws rested upon the conviction, true enough

[1] B. N. It. 2010; Letts. IV, 299; A. N. K. 1530 f. 52; Arch. Vat., 22 Nov. 1572; Lord Acton, 73, 87, 88.

in itself, that the teaching of false doctrine was a great danger to society and the false conclusion that therefore, for the sake of society and for the honor of God, the offender ought to be put to death. This heresy of the duty of persecution, the most dangerous heresy that ever attached itself to the teaching of Christ, still held sway over the minds of most men, although its power was beginning to be slightly weakened; more by the pressure of facts than by the abstract arguments of the few who had yet questioned it. Pope Pius IV, for instance, had declared a few years before that he would rather pardon a criminal who had committed a hundred murders than an obstinate heretic, and Beza, who had led the Calvinist delegation at the Colloquy of Poissy, had written that heretics were worse criminals than parricides and the good of society required a more severe punishment for heresy than for any other crime.[1] The best starting point for an attack upon this false doctrine is the effects it has produced upon the history of generations of men who have held it to be true. But no just judgment can be passed upon any single instance of those effects without taking into account the whole series.

The outcome of the doctrine of persecution in eulogies of St. Bartholomew was, however, so terribly exaggerated, that, all over the world, it enabled men, even in spite of their prejudices, to see the truth. This attempt, by the use of inexorable logic to push the falsehood they believed roughshod over all the sentiments of humanity and the feelings of honor, seemed to thousands a ghastly *ad absurdum.* Even in Italy it was questioned. A correspondent wrote to the Duke of Savoy from Rome. "The deed has been praised, but it would have been praised very much more if it could have been done under the forms of justice." The Spanish Ambassador at Rome wrote to his master that the Frenchmen there were bragging about things in connection with St. Bartholomew which were not allowable even against rebels and heretics. The Emperor Maxi-

[1] Ctd. Acton, de Haereticis puniendis, Tract. Theol., I, 143, 145.

milian of Germany, who had been urged by the Pope to imitate the glorious action of the King of France, told a French envoy six months later that "the King and his mother had done the most ill-advised and evil thing in the world," and wrote to one of his friends: "The King of France has committed an act which will stamp upon him a shame which cannot be easily wiped off. God forgive those who are responsible." It is evident from a long letter from the French Ambassador in Venice that the formal congratulations of the government did not express the real opinion of the Venetian senators. He wrote as follows:

"MADAME:

"The plain truth is, that the massacres through all France have so strongly stirred the hearts of those here who are well disposed towards your crown that, although they are all Catholics, they will not listen to any excuse for it, laying the blame for everything that has been done on you." [1]

The Duke of Anjou had just declared his candidacy for the vacant elective throne of Poland. The French ambassador in charge of the negotiation writes to the Secretary of State that the news from France has sunk their ship just as they were bringing it into port. "The Devil take the cause," he burst out in vexation, "which has brought about so many evils and has led a good and humane king if there ever was one on the earth, to dip his hand in blood; which seems to be a thing so attractive that no prince ever touched it without wanting to do it again." He warns the secretary: "If, before the election, the news of any cruelty whatever comes to Poland, ten millions of gold wouldn't buy a vote." [2]

One of these men had been employed by Catherine in important missions ever since she gained the leading authority in the state and the other, Valence, had been active in diplomacy or influential at the council board ever since the days of Francis I. There is overwhelming evidence that

[1] Ctd. Philippson (1), 258; A. N. K. 1531 f. 61; ctd. Frémy (2), 167, B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 20600 f. 55.
[2] Noailles, II, 127, ctd.

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their attitude was typical of the feeling of the great mass of the French nobility whether of the sword or of the robe. They abhorred St. Bartholomew in their hearts from the start and as soon as they dared, they repudiated it. It is possible of course to find a number of French voices which praised and approved the deed. One of the Parisian clergy, for instance, has recorded in his journal his joy at seeing that those who destroyed the cross of Gastines now could not make white crosses big enough to put into their hats as a sign that they had become good Catholics. The belated massacre at Bordeaux was brought about, in spite of the stand taken by the Governor and the public prosecutor, by the preaching of a Jesuit, who told the people repeatedly that the massacre at Paris had been done by the special help of an angel of the Lord. The Cardinal of Lorraine, as official spokesman for the French clergy, declared that Charles IX was like the good king Josiah of the ancient Jews, who had purged his kingdom of idolaters and brought his people back to believe in God. But these three voices from the clergy of Paris, the Jesuits and the Cardinals (the Cardinal of Bourbon excepted) came from what had been from the beginning the three strongest centers of the demand for the extermination of the Huguenots.[1]

There was another class of public defenders of the massacre whose utterances must be discounted by one who wishes to estimate the true attitude of France towards it. De Thou writes it was deplorable to see persons highly respected for their piety, wisdom and integrity, holding the leading positions in the kingdom, like Morvillier, de Thou, Pibrac, Monluc and Bellièvre, praise an action which they detested in their hearts; under the false idea that the good of the state demanded that they should stand by what had been done and could not be undone. This testimony is the more remarkable because one of the men de Thou blames was his most intimate friend and another his own father.

[1] Journal, 150; de Thou, IV, 652; Cal. F. 1573, p. 392; Bouillé, II, 538, ctd. Mss.

Of him de Thou relates that he was accustomed in private to apply to St. Bartholomew this verse of Statius: "May the memory of the crimes of that day perish; may future generations refuse to believe them; let us certainly keep silent and let the crimes of our own nation be covered by thick darkness." [1]

While many of the French nobility of the robe thus suppressed their own moral judgment out of weakness or statecraft, the nobility of the sword found a way to express their feeling of disgust. Very few of them had taken part in the crime, for aside from the four great nobles already mentioned, it is almost possible to count on the fingers the names of French nobles mentioned in connection with the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and when Cosseins, the colonel of the royal guard, who had superintended the murder of the wounded Admiral and most of the other killings around the palace joined the royal camp at La Rochelle, he was sent to coventry almost as completely as the hired assassin Maurevel. He often said to Brantôme, who afterwards played tennis with him: "Cursed be the day of St. Bartholomew." This incident seems to prove better than a whole volume of citations that Brantôme, a passionate hero worshiper of the Duke of Guise, whose murder his friends had avenged on the Admiral, expressed the opinion of the fighting Catholic nobles of France when he called St. Bartholomew "a very dirty massacre."

No Politique could support St. Bartholomew, not only because it was against their policy, but also because their leaders had been in danger of perishing with the Huguenots. The advisability of killing the Montmorencies and their adherents had been discussed by the little knot of people who planned the massacre. This was known or suspected in Paris at once and the common talk was that they had escaped only because Marshal Montmorency, the head of the house, was at his château of Chantilly, where for some years he had kept a guard strong enough to hold it against

[1] De Thou, IV, 600, 644.

anything short of a military expedition. The killing of his brothers and friends, while he remained alive, meant a civil war led by the first baron of France.[1]

On the other hand, the ultra-orthodox Catholic nobility had a right to feel that the thing had been done without their knowledge and consent. The council which advised with the King on this very grave matter contained no fair representation of the marshals of France, the princes of the blood, the ancient nobility or the clergy. The presence of the Duke of Montpensier and Morvillier is mentioned only by two reporters, the Florentines Cavriana and Corbinelli, one of whom may have gotten the names from the other. Of the remaining eight: four, Catherine, the Duke of Nevers, the Count de Retz and Birague were Italians—the three young men, the King (twenty-two), his brother, the Duke of Anjou (twenty-one) and the Duke of Guise (twenty-two) had spent the most impressionable part of their lives under the influence of Italian mothers. Marshal Tavannes was the only pure-blooded Frenchman we know certainly was present at this sinister council. There was therefore a great deal of truth in the opinion which the Ambassador-extraordinary of Venice reported as prevalent immediately after St. Bartholomew; and surely he can not be suspected of having any particular prejudice against Italians or in favor of heretics. He wrote: "The Catholics are disgusted beyond measure as much as the Huguenots—not, as they say, at the deed itself, so much as at the manner of doing it. . . . They call this way of proceeding by absolute power without legal process, a tyrant's way, attributing it to the Queen Mother as an Italian, a Florentine and of the house of Medici; whose blood is impregnated with tyranny. For this reason she is detested to the highest degree and, on her account, so is the whole Italian nation . . . from which may come her death. Because if she should die and if that supreme authority she has over the King were gone, he would come into the hands of

[1] Brant., IV, 299; Tavannes, 304, Cal. F. 1573, p. 183.

certain ministers of state of whom they are not afraid—on the contrary, freed from fear, they would hope to return entirely to liberty." [1]

The name of Machiavelli had then become a sort of a bugaboo and both Catholic and Protestant used it freely as the worst possible condemnation of anything done by the other side which they disliked. Thus Granvelle wrote to Philip II that Cecil was imbued with the principles of Machiavelli. All those who now attacked Catherine said that she was a disciple of Machiavelli and carried out his doctrines in the massacre of St. Bartholomew because "his book was her gospel." But, although Catherine had a copy of the Prince among over forty-five hundred books in her library, there is nothing whatever to show that she had read it. Indeed, during her whole life, she continually transgressed the maxims of Machiavelli; nowhere more markedly than in the blundering crime of St. Bartholomew. It is absurd to assume that every practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which seems to free statecraft from the limits of morality, is due to the teaching of Machiavelli. This is to put the effect for the cause. The things in Machiavelli which strike us as immoral were not invented by him. He simply logically analyzes, assembles into a system and turns toward a patriotic purpose, practices common before his day and continued for generations after his death by people who never turned a page of his works.[2]

The thing that shocked the French the most was the treachery of St. Bartholomew, because "in the middle of the marriage festival of a daughter of France those who had come to Paris on the solemn public word of the King were treated in that fashion." "It was repeated everywhere that the Huguenot captain Pilles, led out for slaughter from the house of the King where he had come as an invited

[1] Rel. I, 4, p. 299; Comp. B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 20600 f. 55.
[2] "Tocsain contre les massacreurs."—Van Dyke Review (2).

guest, cried out as the hallebardes pierced him, 'Oh what a peace! Oh what a word of honor!' "[1]

This dislike of disloyalty is expressed in the following true story which will bear retelling, although years ago it was made the foundation of a successful romance. In the province of Quercy there were two gentlemen both very brave. One named Vezins, lieutenant of the governor of the province, mingled with his bravery a ferocity which made him odious to many people. The other, Regnier, was of a more gentle and courteous spirit. These two gentlemen hated each other with a mortal hatred and their neighbors had tried in vain to reconcile them. Regnier, who was a Protestant, came up to Paris for the marriage and when the massacre began he remained in his room with the fear of death before his eyes. Suddenly the door was broken in and Vezins entered, sword in hand, followed by two soldiers. Regnier, thinking that his end had come, kneeled upon the ground and implored the mercy of God. Vezins in a terrible voice bade him rise and mount a horse which was ready in the street. Regnier obeying, left the city with his enemy, who exacted from him an oath to follow and led him all the way to Guienne, without saying a word the entire road. He simply ordered his attendants to take care of him and to see to it that he had everything that was necessary, at the inns. At last they arrived at the château of Regnier; then Vezins addressed him as follows: "It was in my hands, as you see, to take the chance which I have sought for a long time, but I should be ashamed to avenge myself in that way on a man as brave as you are. When we settle our quarrel I want the danger to be equal. You can be sure that you will always find me ready to settle our differences as gentlemen should." Regnier answered him: "I have not, my dear Vezins, either resolution or force or courage against you. Henceforth I will follow you with all my heart wherever you want, ready to employ in your service the life which I owe to you and

[1] Pasquier (a Catholic), Neg. Tosc., III, 820.

the little courage which you say I possess." After these words he fell upon his neck. Vezins, keeping still in his attitude some of his usual ferocity, answered: "It's for you to choose whether you want to have me for your enemy or your friend." Without waiting for an answer he gave the spurs to his horse and rode off.

The once vivid feeling embalmed in this story, like a fly in amber, that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was a piece of cowardly treachery a gentleman would not show to his bitterest enemy, was not changed by the later charge that the Huguenots had conspired to rise that very night in a rebellion which included the murder of the King and the royal family, because, in the end, nobody who had any real chance to know the facts, believed it. In the first place the King at the beginning gave another explanation of the great slaughter and afterwards circulated in some parts a third; in the second place, while two men were executed for this conspiracy, no proof of it was ever published, although it is known that the papers of the Admiral and all his followers were seized and carefully searched; in the third place it was a matter of astonishment that so many Huguenot captains whose desperate courage had been so often proved, died like sheep without even an attempt at resistance. A conspiracy to kill the royal family would have surely meant a desperate fight with the guard and the probability of having to cut their way out through the streets of an intensely hostile city. It is incredible that a band of trained soldiers who had planned any such thing would have been found unprovided with arms and ammunition and taken entirely by surprise. The son of Tavannes who wrote his memoirs records the opinion that the accusation was a deliberate lie, invented to free the King from blame. The Legate wrote, "this charge that the Admiral had conspired against the King and his brothers is absolutely false and it is shameful that any man who has sense enough to know anything should believe it." Two courtiers like de Foix, who had filled many diplomatic posts, and

Malassise, who had been one of the commissioners for the Peace of St. Germain, laughed at the idea of any one believing it.[1]

There is nothing to indicate that Catherine ever felt any remorse or regret for St. Bartholomew. A definite sense of wrong doing was something entirely foreign to a typical woman of the Renascence like Catherine. Vague expressions that "God is punishing us for our sins" occur indeed in her letters but from anything like personal repentance her most sincerely pious letters are as free as the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini. Of feeling like Lady Macbeth that her hands were stained with unwashable blood from the murder of her own guests under her own roof, she was morally incapable. The very day of the massacre while the killers were still dragging out their prey to slaughter them in the streets or drown them in the river, she had recovered her equanimity and wrote one of her usual kindly letters recommending one of her chaplains to the favor of the Prince of Florence.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew had woven over it the most complicated web of public lies to be found in the tortuous annals of European diplomacy. They are so manifestly false and so unblushingly contradictory that one would be tempted to call their falsehoods fatuous, if it were not for the fact that they brought to Catherine the greatest diplomatic triumph of her career, by furnishing her neighbors, none of whom believed what she told them, decent pretexts for doing what she wanted them to do. Catherine had never been afraid of physical danger, but her habitual policy was a timid and cautious one which avoided bold steps. When the intoxication of letting herself go in bloody forcible triumph was passed, no one would be quicker than she to realize the embarrassment and dangers of her position. Notwithstanding the enthusiastic praise from the proletariat, and the lower bourgeoisie of Paris, among whom she

[1] Pasquier, II, 133; Tavannes, 290; Arch. Vat., I, 5, p. 136; also at Venice, B. N. Nouvs. Acqs., 20600 f. 55.

had been so unpopular since the peace of St. Germain, she was shrewd enough to feel, almost immediately, the burden of disapproval among the more influential classes of the realm, even though it was unexpressed. Besides she had not got all the Huguenot leaders and she must have feared from the start that some of them might organize resistance behind the walls of cities like Montauban, Nismes or La Rochelle. There was nothing in the world she feared so much as the power of the King of Spain. Consequently there was no international situation she would have hated more than the loss of the ancient allies of France, the Protestant princes of Germany, the Protestant cantons of Switzerland and her new ally, Queen Elizabeth of England, and so being forced into political dependence on Philip of Spain and the Pope. Catherine never saw the letter Philip wrote to Alva rejoicing because, since the Protestants would never trust her again, France must now seek his friendship, but she shuddered at the mere thought of this result which Philip mistakenly judged inevitable. This is why, when the Legate came to congratulate her upon St. Bartholomew, Catherine showed the strongest reluctance to entering into any league with Spain and the Pope and begged him to leave the kingdom as soon as possible, lest he excite the suspicions of Protestants that some general attack was to be made upon them. She wanted, at the same time, to satisfy public opinion in France, to keep her old allies, and to gain as much credit as she could from Spain and the Pope for what she had done.[1]

While the massacre was still going on Catherine woke to the necessity of presenting some explanation of it to the people of France and to Elizabeth, with whom she had just made a defensive league. Two letters were therefore prepared, copies of which were to be sent to the governors of the provinces, to the French Ambassador in England, and to the French Ambassador in Switzerland. One gave a brief

[1] Neg. Tosc. III, 819; Wüttke, ctd., 173; Arch. Vat. Dec. 7, 1572. See N.

account of the attempt to assassinate the Admiral "by a shot fired from the window of a house where lodges the tutor of the Duke of Guise." The King says he proposes to do very strict justice upon this evil deed and adds a postscript that "this wicked act comes out of the enmity between the Admiral's house and those of the house of Guise." It may be suspected that this letter was not written two days before, but at the same time as the following letter, of the 24th of August.

"You will have read what I wrote the day before yesterday about the wounding of my cousin the Admiral." It goes on to say that, while he was doing his best to establish the facts in order to do justice, "those of the house of Guise, fearing the vengeance of the Admiral's friends, rose and killed him with some other gentlemen and others were massacred in different parts of the city. This was done with such fury that I could not stop it, having enough to do with my guards and other forces to keep myself in safety in my château of the Louvre . . . and every one must understand that there is nothing I hate more than what has just happened." [1]

The fact that Catherine should have sent such an explantation all over France and to foreign countries, when thousands of people knew that a pile of the dead bodies of Huguenot captains killed in the palace itself had been spread out before its gates, shows that she had lost her usual readiness of mind. Therefore, on the next day, another account was written and sent to the French Ambassador to be laid before Elizabeth. This said that while the King was doing his best to find the guilty man for the attack upon the Admiral, he and his friends formed a conspiracy to kill the King and his family, which was betrayed to him by some of the new religion. They had therefore been compelled to give a free hand to those of the house of Guise who, with a small number of soldiers killed the Admiral and some other gentlemen of his faction, while the King

[1] La Mothe, VII, 323; Arch. C., VII, 153.

was shut up in the Louvre with his family keeping the closed gates with his guard. Some gentlemen of the new religion who were in the palace for the purpose of carrying out this conspiracy, were driven out of it. The people, angered by these things, used great violence towards those of the new religion whose chiefs were all killed; to the great regret of His Majesty though they themselves gave the occasion for it.[1]

But even this would not do, for the Guise declined to accept the responsibility which the King was trying to thrust on them. So the same day on which this last account was written the King appeared before the Parlement of Paris and solemnly declared that having learned that Coligny had plotted to exterminate the royal family, including the King of Navarre, he had given orders for all the actions of the 24th of August as the only way he could defend himself against the danger. The substance of this speech was circulated in a proclamation, and Parlement endorsed the King's explanation by declaring the name of Coligny stained with "eternal infamy" and ordering that his arms should be dragged through the cities of France at the horses' tail, his château razed, the trees of his park cut down to half their height and its soil sown with salt. The Admiral's headless body had already been dragged by the mob through the streets of Paris. It was now ordered hung on a gibbet. The Tuscan Ambassador reported: "I hear from a trustworthy source that the Duke of Guise sent (perhaps by one of his esquires) the head of the Admiral to the Cardinal of Lorraine at Rome." This might be dismissed as malevolent gossip but for the following letter from the Governor of Lyons to the King: "I have received, sire, the letter by which your Majesty sends me word that Your Majesty is informed that a man has left with the head taken from the body of the Admiral to carry it to Rome and ordering me, when the said man shall arrive in this city, to arrest him and take away the said head. I at once made such

[1] La Mothe, VII, 328-330, Aug. 26.

arrangements that if he comes, Your Majesty's commands shall be followed. Recently no one has passed through this city in the direction of Rome, except an esquire of the Duke of Guise named Paule, who had left four hours before I received your Majesty's letter." [1]

These versions of the massacre given by the crown itself, were, of course, impossible to reconcile with each other, and, unfortunately for Catherine, Elizabeth saw the first version before she heard of the other two; because, as the courier landed in England at the same time with six or seven boat loads of refugees, the English officers took his dispatches away from him and sent them at once to the Queen. Documents similar to those sent to England were sent to Switzerland and the Ambassador writes to Catherine how much he is puzzled by the contradiction between the two explanations. Fortunately, he said, he had not published the first because, when he received it, letters telling an entirely different story had come to Switzerland from Italy. Although he has now published the true account of this execrable conspiracy, the Protestant cantons talk of the affair in a way he hardly dares to write. "They say that you and the house of Guise have planned this affair for a long time (for they leave the King out of the plot) and that you arranged the whole marriage of Navarre and Margaret to catch your victims." He begs for the names of witnesses to the conspiracy and the confessions of some prisoners in order that he may publish them in Switzerland and Germany.[2]

The opinion of the Swiss Protestants, that the wedding had been a plot and the massacre a crime long in hatching, brings in another skein in that complicated web of lies which Catherine wove about St. Bartholomew. A fourth false account of the massacre entirely irreconcilable with all three of the accounts given out in France and sent to her northern neighbors by Catherine, was circulated south

[1] De Thou, IV, 599; Paris, 57.
[2] La Mothe, V, 112; Letts. IV, 143.

of the Alps and the Pyrenees by representative Frenchmen and for a time quietly endorsed by Catherine herself to those with whom she thought it might gain her more credit. The letters from Italy, referred to by the Swiss Ambassador, reported that the long premeditation which the Swiss charged as the last touch of crime, was claimed by some French Catholics as the greatest glory. The news was officially brought to Rome by a royal messenger and letters from the Nuncio. The letter from the King was the one sent out the first day, representing the whole affair as a faction fight between the houses of Guise and Châtillon. The letter from the Nuncio, however, said that the Queen Mother thought that "no one ought now to doubt that these things had happened in accordance with a long thought out plan of which she had spoken to me before at Blois." The most distinguished Frenchman south of the Alps was the Cardinal of Lorraine and he had a very marked motive for endorsing this account of the event. If so great a stroke of statecraft had been made without his knowledge, the common report that he was now without any influence in the French government would be accepted everywhere. As he had been absent from France for months, either it must have been planned beforehand or else he was entirely ignorant of it. He therefore asserted that the entire affair was planned before he left France. Under his patronage there was begun almost immediately a book entitled "The Stratagem of Charles IX." This claimed great glory for the zeal and skill of the King of France and his mother, who had deliberately lured the Huguenots into a trap prepared long beforehand in order to exterminate them. It was chiefly on the basis of letters received from Italy, that the Emperor Maximilian, like the Swiss, refused to believe the official account of the affair when it was laid before him by the French Ambassador. The German Princes followed his example. Against this suspicion, all Catherine's efforts to make the massacre appear in Protestant countries as a deed not done "in hatred of the new religion nor for the

purpose of exterminating it, but only to punish the accursed conspiracy of the Admiral and his friends," could not prevail. Thus by a long circuitous path, which twice crossed the Alps, one of her lies overtook and destroyed another.[1]

The case was somewhat similar in Spain. There too, news of the massacre reached Philip before it came to the French Ambassador. The Ambassador had found it rather hard to explain to Philip that the Huguenots (who, as Philip knew, had secretly the express permission of Charles) were invading the Netherlands against the orders of their King, and to his great regret. On the 7th of September the French Ambassador was very much astonished to be told by one of Philip's secretaries that all the Huguenots of France had been murdered. The Frenchman, as he wrote afterwards, did not show the least surprise, but, in order to carry the matter off better, he assumed to the Spanish King when he saw him that the whole thing had been planned long before. When a few days later, people about the Spanish court began to deny this, the Ambassador indignantly repudiated this doubt as the utterance of evil intentioned persons who wanted to deprive the King of France of the glory which he deserved. Philip was already informed by his Ambassador in Paris that the massacre was not a long considered plot, but a sudden resolution. Nevertheless he was quite willing to flatter the French Ambassador by affecting to believe his falsehood. He even admitted they had been very stupid not to see the hidden meaning of a number of things he had said to them before.[2]

The use that Catherine wanted to make of any credit she might gain in Spain for this deed was soon evident. In the first place there were Huguenots alive who might be dangerous—prisoners in the hand of Alva, the remains of the expedition for the relief of Mons which had invaded the Netherlands with the secret consent of Charles IX.

[1] Theiner, I, 329; Mackintosh, III, 355; Groen, I, qtd. Wüttke, 146. Translated into French, 1574; pntd. Groen, IV, 23, B. N. fds. fr. 3951 f. 158-159; Letts. IV, 121.

[2] B. N. fds. fr. 16105, A. N. K. 1530 f. 29; D'Ars ctd. 47.

Philip was urged to see that they were all put to death and he wrote on the margin of the letter that it ought to be done. But Alva was not at all agreed to this policy for he wrote to the King: "It is a good thing to keep Genlis alive and to let France know that we can let loose men who can make trouble for them." Catherine also wished to marry the Duke of Anjou to his niece, her grand-daughter, the oldest daughter of Philip II, and she used her new found favor at Rome to help her plan. The Legate to France supported this idea. Charles IX suggested that Philip should give Naples or Milan as a dot and the Duke of Savoy suggested that France and Spain should join in conquering England for the young couple. But Philip was exceedingly cold to the proposal and manifestly had no intention whatever of making war on England. Any credit that Catherine may have gained, therefore, south of the Alps or the Pyrenees by the false suggestions that the massacre had been planned a long while before, did not in the end prove very useful to her plans for the marriage of her children.[1]

Meantime she became more and more aware that the rumors of its having been planned years before in conjunction with Spain, were putting her diplomatic plans in great danger throughout all the rest of the world. She was also perfectly infuriated to hear that the Cardinal of Lorraine was claiming at Rome all the credit of the affair. She now said to the Tuscan Ambassador that Lorraine had nothing whatever to do with it, because the whole thing had been resolved on suddenly and "that for lying and malignity Admiral Coligny and the Cardinal of Lorraine were a pair." Her sons followed her example. The King's ambassador assured Elizabeth that his master "had acted like one who holds a wolf by the ears and that the whole affair had been the most fortuitous and the least premeditated thing that had ever happened." Charles IX became particularly in-

[1] A. N. K. 1530 f. 45; Gachard, II, 287; Letts. IV, 114; Arch. Vat. Fr., I, 5, 6, 208, 22 Nov. 1572; B. N. It. 1272, p. 345.

dignant over the harm that was being done to him among the Protestant princes by "the tricks of the Spaniards trying to make the world believe that I had planned this thing a long time before with them." His younger brother followed suit by writing to his agents in Germany who were working for his election to the throne of Poland: "You will assure the princes that the thing happened most unexpectedly and without any sort of premeditation whatever." [1]

These denials probably did not change very much the mistaken conviction, by this time pretty generally adopted throughout the Protestant world, that the whole affair had been planned long before by Catherine, Philip and the Pope. So far as this charge affected them, Philip and the Pope knew of course, what anybody who reads the secret diplomatic correspondence before the event can also know with the utmost certainty, that the idea was absurd. Those who had inside knowledge of affairs in Venice, Florence and Rome soon had reason to know, as Philip did, that the affair had not been planned beforehand by anybody. The Nuncio, who on the 27th of August, had forwarded Catherine's remark that she had planned the whole thing a long while ago, wrote his careful judgment on the 2nd of September that the Queen had suddenly persuaded the King to the massacre because she was afraid her share in the intended murder of the Admiral would be found out and he never varied from that opinion. The Florentine Ambassador after long examination deliberately formed the same judgment. The Ambassador-Extraordinary of Venice (Michieli), who left Paris very soon after St. Bartholomew, reported, it is true, to the Senate, that it was the opinion of many people of great importance in the court that the whole thing was really the work of the Queen Mother who had planned it long before. But his intimate friend Cavalli, the regular ambassador who remained in France until after the death of Charles IX, in a later report wrote,

[1] Neg. Tosc., III, 842; La Mothe, V, 125; B. N. fds. fr. 16105; ctd. d'Ars, 57; Groen, I, Vol. 4, p. 26.

"a careful study of the facts makes evident that the deed was improvised and not planned long before." [1]

But although the Pope and the Cardinals, the King of Spain and his ministers, the Venetian Senate and the Duke of Florence, had good reason to know that St. Bartholomew was not premeditated, but improvised, the rest of the world, Catholic as well as Protestant, rather naturally came to take the very contradiction of this whole mass of falsehoods as a strong additional proof of the truth of what seemed, according to the standpoint of the hearer, the most discreditable, the most dramatic or the most glorious of all of them; that is to say, a long and crafty plot to entrap the Huguenots. Strangely enough so far as the historians are concerned who may be spoken of as contemporary, the four best Protestant writers either express disbelief in a long premeditated plan or else leave the question undecided, while five Roman Catholics express their belief in a long prepared plot. The opinion of the Catholic writers prevailed and the seventeenth century historians universally accepted the idea of a long premeditated plot; in which they were followed by the writers of the eighteenth century. It is only since the middle of the nineteenth century that history has returned to the better opinion of some contemporary Protestant writers, agreeing as it does with the contemporary memoirs most worthy of trust, the testimony of the facts as they are established by surviving documents and the reports of residents at the French court who were best able to get at the truth. The old explanation, however, still finds defenders and it has been so firmly fixed in the modern mind that it has not yet disappeared from among the ideas of the average man who has read a little history.[2]

[1] Arch. Vat., I, 5 f. 133 Francia; Rel. I, 4, pp. 294, 328.
[2] See Note.

CHAPTER XXIX

"THE CATHERINE LEGEND": ITS ORIGINS

In spite of the tremendous shock of St. Bartholomew, Catherine succeeded in preventing any immediate breaks with her Protestant allies and she had no intention of allowing anything she did in Paris to stop the negotiations for the marriage of Elizabeth to her younger son. The day before Coligny was shot she wrote to propose that they should meet at sea between Dover and Calais some calm day, because she is as anxious to see her as if "she were my own daughter." After the massacre she kept urging the marriage, pointing out that in the days of her father-in-law and Elizabeth's father, neither the King of England nor the Protestant German princes altered their friendship for France, although many people were being burnt and hung there on account of religion.[1]

Public opinion in England was filled with "an extreme indignation and a marvellous hatred" against the French. Nevertheless after two weeks' hesitation Elizabeth and her council decided to accept the explanations of the French King, although they knew them to be false. The council did this in a way carefully arranged to be as insulting as possible. They told the Ambassador that "they were very glad to hear that this deed had been done under the pressure of extreme necessity, because, without doubt, it was the most enormous deed which had happened upon the earth since Jesus Christ; . . . a deed which had violated the word of honor of a great king and troubled the royal wedding of his sister, . . . a deed done against all law, divine and human, and that in short faith had been broken. But the ques-

[1] Letts. IV, 111; La Mothe, VII, 328.

tion remained, by whom? They were very glad that I had showed them that it was by the subjects." Elizabeth shared the horror of her people and their skepticism in regard to the conspiracy of the Admiral. Nevertheless she did not entirely break off the negotiations for the marriage. She agreed to see Catherine and her son if they would come over to Dover, and in the beginning of November the French Ambassador reported that neither the Spaniards nor the Huguenots could move the Queen and her council from her intention to stand firmly by the alliance with the French Crown.[1]

This diplomatic triumph of the tortuous diplomacy of Catherine was marred by the failure of her plans at home. St. Bartholomew had been followed by the conversion to Catholicism of the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé, who at their own humble request were received back into the ancient church. This was a great satisfaction to Catherine. The first time the King of Navarre went to mass she stood up to watch him commune and when he took the wafer with an air of devotion, she turned to the Spanish Ambassador "with a very loud laugh." The example of their leaders was followed in Paris alone by 527 Huguenots.[2]

It is easy to understand why Catherine was so content with the situation and thought her greatest problem was at last solved. One reason, indeed the chief reason, why the Huguenot insurrections had been so hard to suppress, was the union in the party of two diverse elements. The churches by themselves, although they were able to hold or seize certain cities and to put into the field a force of harquebusiers and German mercenary cavalry, could never have made head against the Crown. Their armies would have been driven across the border as William the Silent's armies were driven out of the Netherlands, if it had not been for their union with the younger Bourbon-younger Montmorency faction of the nobility, which gave them

[1] Letts. IV, 125; La Mothe, V, 121, 128, 142, 194; V. 19.
[2] A. N. K. 1530, Sept. 29; Arch. Vat. 28, Feb., 1573.

dependable cavalry, captains, and the authority of princes of the blood royal as leaders; without which they would hardly have received the aid which came to them from England, Germany and Switzerland. Catherine laughed because she believed that their leaders were either killed or frightened out of the Huguenot party, whose other section she could manage by a mixture of fear and conciliation. St. Bartholomew was a crushing disaster to the Huguenot party, but not in the way Catherine thought. The Huguenot nobles were not exterminated, and their survivors, even those who bowed to the storm by recantations which matched perjury against butchering treachery, were far more enraged than frightened. From the point of view of fighting, the new Huguenot leaders were soon to show themselves more skilful than the old ones.

But there was one loss of the party at St. Bartholomew which was never made up. There never was another leader who could do what Coligny had done in keeping the party united, in making the two horses of the Huguenot team, the nobles and the churches, pull together. Coligny was at once a great noble with the tastes and habits of his class and a pious and zealous follower of the new Church. He never was a puritan, but he willingly bowed his neck to the moral discipline of the new organization. He had become a Huguenot because he was a member of the Reformed church and he drew the sword in her defense, not for the advantage of the Huguenot Party. Of the great Huguenot nobles there were manifestly a certain number who were Huguenots before they became Protestants and who were married and baptized their children according to the rites of the Reformed church, largely because membership in it was one of the badges of their party. Men like Condé and Henry of Navarre probably had an intellectual preference for the distinctive views of the Calvinistic theologians, but they never made even the pretense of submitting their lives to the moral discipline of the Calvinistic church and they bore with very ill grace the reproaches of pastors or synods

which they regarded as impertinent when they were merely following the social habits of the other men of their class and imitating the example of the Kings of France.

The pastors who were the dominant influence in the synods had a pride of their own, different indeed from that of the great nobles, but quite as great. Statistics are of course not available, but many of them were like Beza, sons of families of the lesser nobility or country gentry, the more adventurous of whose fathers had for two generations found an outlet from the narrow life of the parish in the great war between Hapsburg and Valois. When their souls went out from traditional beliefs to tread new paths of thought, they were clothed in the old family qualities of courage, ambition and a dominant temper, and when, after their studies in the Theological School of Geneva, they came back secretly to France as missionaries of the new doctrine to brave death at the stake or the scaffold or by butchering mobs, these innate qualities were emphasized rather than weakened by the abiding faith that they were the chosen messengers of God's truth to a nation sunk in error. It is little to be wondered at that their enemies, even some of their partisans, accused the Calvinist ministers of political ambition and a desire to rule. In Orleans at the beginning of the first civil war some of them had given confident advice about the plan of campaign and tried to insist on being informed of the most delicate negotiations with Catherine for peace. Later one of them struck the Huguenot leader de la Noue because he wanted to arrange the surrender of La Rochelle on good terms. This disposition made, even on observers prejudiced in their favor, a disagreeable impression, as when the English Ambassador wrote in 1582: "The King has sent away the Jesuits because they showed the same disposition as the ministers, when they first came to France, to meddle in affairs of state." These traits were, under the circumstances, to be expected. Indeed, it is probable that they are apt to develop in the priests or teachers of every religion which, as Calvinism came to do, assumes

the right to help the spread of its doctrine by force or politics.[1]

That this was a prevalent opinion in regard to the tendencies of the Calvinist ministers in France, appears plainly in a satire published twelve years after St. Bartholomew by a Politique or moderate Catholic. It is a pretended report signed by a joint committee representing "the Venerable Curés and Doctors of the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne, Paris, and the Highly Respectable Ministers of the Reformed Religion," setting forth with all due whereases and therefores, their entire accord that it is "their right to mingle not only in spiritual but also in temporal affairs and particularly in affairs of state such as justice, finance and war—and to sit in judgment on the actions of princes and magistrates." [2]

When Coligny was dead there was no one to maintain unity between the two sections of the Huguenot party, never too easy to make pull together; especially in the intervals of peace. Their disaccord therefore grew from this time on. After Henry of Navarre, who succeeded Coligny as the real leader of the Huguenots, had found himself, he began to show that he was the greatest leader of fighting men France had seen for generations. When the Huguenot ministers assumed to reproach him because, after gaining at Coutras the first victory in a pitched battle the Huguenots had ever won in thirty years of war, he had not been able to follow up his advantage, he pointed disdainfully to the flags of their enemies hanging from the ceiling of the hall where the representatives of the Huguenot party were assembled. Long before this it was common gossip in France that on occasions during a sermon which he found tiresome, he had gone out of his way to make plain that he was not hearing the preacher.[3]

But though the weakening of the union between the two

[1] E. g. Gory, 7, 8; Neg. Tosc., IV, 65; *Condé, I, 86; Desjardins, 49; de Ruble (3), I, 359; d'Aubigné, IV, 14; Cal. F. 1582, p. 445.
[2] De l'Estoile, II, 170.
[3] Ven. Amb., 1579; Tommaseo, II, 636.

wings of the Huguenot party was finally to destroy the last chance of the Reformed religion to establish itself permanently as a large part of the life of the French nation, nevertheless the laughter of Catherine was premature. The Huguenot party was not destroyed nor its fighting strength broken by the slaughter of St. Bartholomew. Before the end of November it was evident to the Legate on his journey through France that "it would take a long while and a great deal of trouble to extinguish the embers of heresy," for by that time a considerable body of Huguenots were standing arms in hands ready for a desperate resistance. The centres of this last stand of the Huguenots were the four strongly fortified cities of Sancerre, Montauban, Nismes and La Rochelle. In addition, many of the Huguenot nobles of the south and east were assembling troops. Among these were the six survivors of the so-called "seven viscounts" who had played a prominent part in organizing the forces of the south in the last war. They now divided the territory up among themselves and carried by surprise or assault nineteen small walled towns.[1]

This situation had not come about without the utmost efforts on the part of the King and his mother to assure the Huguenots that, though he had for the moment suspended the Edict, all of the new religion who would live peaceably might be assured of liberty of conscience and hope in time for the restoration of some rights of worship. Realizing that La Rochelle was the Huguenot stronghold and capital, the King first wrote the burghers a special letter promising that he would allow them to continue their public worship. They were anxious to gain time to complete their preparations for resistance, and they sent a deputation to tell the King that they would obey his orders provided he would withdraw all his ships and troops from their neighborhood. Meantime he sent them as governor Baron de Biron, a well known Politique, whose life might have been in danger at St. Bartholomew if he had not trained upon the entrance

[1] Arch. Vat. 22 Nov., 1572; de Thou, 659-60.

to the arsenal, of which he was commander, two cannon. They sent deputies to meet him and he told them with tears in his eyes that he detested the cruelty they had suffered, but begged them to see that they were too feeble to fight alone the whole forces of the kingdom. It is possible that he might have been successful in his mission, if just at this time Catherine had not struck another note in treating with the Rochellois. One of her close adherents, the Baron de la Garde, whose severity had made him particularly hateful to all Huguenots ever since the days of Francis II, wrote, probably at the orders of Catherine, saying that an army was following close on the heels of Biron and that they had better receive him in peace rather than have him enter their walls at its head. While they were thus attacked alternately by threats and caresses, a mob massacred 264 Huguenots in Bordeaux. After this the Rochellois turned a deaf ear to another royal messenger and two more edicts promising protection to the Protestants. The intensity of their fear and hate is shown by the fact that they wrote offering to acknowledge Elizabeth as their "sovereign queen and natural princess" if she would protect "her people of that Guienne which has belonged to her from all eternity." [1]

Catherine and her son, despairing of persuading the Huguenots of the south to submit, began to get ready to conquer them. Before the end of the year La Rochelle was invested by land and sea. At the same time war broke out in Dauphiny and Languedoc and the siege of Sancerre was begun. The King did not have forces enough to attack at the same time the other two Huguenot cities of refuge. This renewal of the civil war imperilled what Catherine's diplomacy had accomplished in England and what it was trying to accomplish in Germany. For this reason, if for no other, the King would have kept any promise he made to the Huguenots, but every effort to induce them to accept the result of St. Bartholomew, broke down

[1] Pntd. la Ferrière (3).

before their wrath and deep rooted distrust. The governor of Languedoc reported to the King in the end of October, "the people of Montauban say they'd rather die in a body fighting for their lives, than put themselves in the hands of their murderers." A pamphlet was published at La Rochelle expressing the opinion of many of the ministers of the city that to take any Catholic prisoners was to imitate the sin of Saul with Agag. They should all be put to death as the irreconcilable enemies of God, even when they had surrendered under promise that their lives should be spared, because no promise was valid which was made against God. The open acceptance by some Calvinist ministers of the doctrine that faith ought not to be kept with heretics, which had been so often charged with horror against some orthodox theologians by Protestant apologetes, is an unmistakable sign of the terrible anger which possessed their souls.[1]

Their anger centered on Catherine, for some people were ready to excuse the King, partially, because he was scarcely more than a boy who had always been dependent on his mother. The idea that the life of Catherine had from her very girlhood been stained with prodigious crimes dates from this time. It was not recorded before nor is there any reason to believe that it was entertained. This picture of Catherine as a person not human in her wickedness, has almost in our own day been vividly printed upon the imagination of mankind by the genius of two writers of fiction, Dumas in his novels, and Balzac, who though he essayed to write biography had examined only easily accessible sources, not with an eye single to historic truth, but instinctively searching for picturesque or dramatic matter. The material for their picture came largely from pamphlets written against her out of the horror and wrath aroused in the minds of the friends of those who died by the treacherous cruelty of St. Bartholomew. The most striking of these is "The Marvellous Account of the Life, Actions and Conduct of Catherine de Médicis." This says her people came from

[1] Goulart. De Thou; pntd. Loutchitzki; pntd. Goulart, II, 246, Acton.

the very dregs of Florence and lived for a long time in vile alleys of the slums, until a barber's surgeon of their number assumed the name of Medicis (médecin) and took for his arms six pills (the balls of the Médicis arms). The family descended from him incarnated the worst vices of the conscienceless people of Florence and rose to power by the deepest crimes. The astrologers predicted at her birth that she would bring ruin to the family into which she was married; which made her parents resolve never to give her in marriage. This wise resolution was broken, after her parents' death, by her uncle, who wanted to use her as a pawn in his political game. As a young bride she poisoned her brother-in-law in order to make her husband heir to the throne of France and indulged in secret pleasures and detestable practices. She was the cause of the conspiracy of Amboise in hopes of destroying the Guise. When that failed, she turned against the conspirators, encouraged the bloody executions which followed, and poisoned the Vidame of Chartres in prison. When, at the death of Francis II, her little son Charles IX became king, she tried her best to destroy his naturally good character in order to keep authority in her own hands and used freely the honor of the young ladies of her court to debauch the King of Navarre and great nobles who might be useful or dangerous to her. She rejoiced greatly when the King of Navarre was killed in the siege of Rouen. Having been secretly a Huguenot before, she then became a Catholic and sent to the Prince of Condé some perfume which, if he had smelt it, would have killed him. His doctor, however, suspected the deadly ruse, smelt it cautiously and brought on a terrible inflammation of the face, gave a little of it to a dog and the dog died. When she took the King on his journey around the kingdom, she spent her time in secretly urging the Catholic nobility to exterminate the Huguenots. She arranged the meeting at Moulins in the hope that the leaders of the Huguenots and the Guise would quarrel and exterminate each other, thus freeing her from the control of both.

She had planned through her son the Duke of Anjou to murder the Prince of Condé on a hunting party and she succeeded in poisoning the Prince of Porcien by a drug prepared by the same skillful poisoner who had prepared the perfume. She then succeeded in persuading the Huguenots that all these crimes really came from the Duke of Guise and they began the second civil war. Between the second and third war she planned to seize the Huguenot chiefs. (This charge as we know was true.) She then sent agents to poison the entire Huguenot army and gave one of them ten thousand francs to buy poison. When this failed she tried to bribe servants of the Prince of Condé, the Admiral and his brother to poison their masters and succeeded in poisoning the Admiral's brother. She then sent the assassin who shot de Mouy. During all these wars she continually urged battle because she wished to destroy the French nobility and whenever she got news of a battle, even though fifty Catholics had been slain to three Huguenot gentlemen, she always laughed aloud with joy. When her daughter Margaret showed harmless pleasure in the society of the agreeable young Duke of Guise, Catherine persuaded her two sons that the Duke was presumptuously trying to marry their sister and they made up their minds to kill him. When he escaped their ambuscade, the King at her suggestion gave a dagger to his bastard half-brother in order that he might assassinate the Duke. She planned to massacre all the Huguenots at the marriage of her son the King to the daughter of the Emperor. At the very time when she was on the most friendly terms with the Admiral, she poisoned his brother, the Cardinal of Châtillon, in England. She planned the marriage of her daughter Margaret for the purpose of massacring the Huguenots and poisoned the mother of the groom beforehand in order to get her out of the way. She planned a massacre of all the Politiques in the royal army during the siege of La Rochelle. After peace had been made with La Rochelle, she planned a treacherous surprise of the city and a contemporaneous

massacre of the chiefs of the Catholic nobility of France. When the plot failed, she wrote that the agents she had sent to conduct that surprise were common law breakers who should be punished with the utmost severity. After this she twice sent Maurevel, the assassin of Coligny, to shoot the Duke of Montmorency. These deeds were not cast in Catherine's teeth before St. Bartholomew and the violence of the language of the indictment here coldly summarized ought to have put every reader of later generations on his guard, against believing Catherine guilty of crimes which were never committed, many of them from motives which her letters show she never had. But it is not possible to expect balanced judgment from men suffering from such an access of passion as that which produced, for example, the following epigram: "The vengeance of God made the dogs eat Jezebel, but when Catherine dies not even the dogs will touch her carrion." [1] The sudden revelation given by St. Bartholomew of the terrible potentiality of her heart for evil, made people jump to the false conclusion that, for many years before, it must have been expending energy in planning or committing infernal crimes.

Immediately after St. Bartholomew the Huguenots began to develop another sort of literary attack which menaced Catherine's power. Their opponents had from the beginning accused them of cloaking political rebellion under pretense of religious liberty. They had deduced this accusation from the general principle that variation in religion threatened the unity of the state whose foundation was the ancient maxim, "un Dieu, un Roi, une loi, une foi," frequently engraved over the gates of French cities. They had also supported it by the fact that in some of the early troubles of a limited district, the insurrection of the persecuted had been associated with agrarian and class attacks upon the châteaux of the seigneurs. The intellectual leaders of the Reformed Church had been most anxious to refute this charge. Calvin, in the preface of his Institutes,

[1] Pntd. Lenient.

denounced to Francis I as a slander the idea that they wished to wrest the sceptre out of the hands of kings. He was inclined at first to the doctrine of passive resistance and had some hesitation in working out a theory of armed defense against the edicts of the King, under the lead of the princes of the blood who had a hereditary duty to defend the rights of the nation. Very advanced political ideas on constitutional monarchy were indeed suggested by the cahiers of the Estates of Pontoise (1561)—an assembly of so strong a Huguenot tinge that the influence of Coligny was able to get from it what Catherine wanted—but these ideas had not, before the massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), been developed by a single one of the numerous Huguenot pamphleteers with "pens that cut as well as their swords." [1]

A new generation of apologetes had now arisen to defend the Huguenot cause; all laymen who began to shift their efforts from personal denunciation, religious controversy or the discussion of grievances, to the field of politics and to base the right of resistance to oppressive laws on the idea that the King is not absolute, but restrained by the sovereignty of the nation. A dozen important treatises of this nature were printed within five or six years of St. Bartholomew; more than half of them within eighteen months of it. The "Franco Gallia" of Francis Hotman, an exiled professor of Roman law at Geneva, attempted to prove historically that France was a constitutional monarchy, with a crown not hereditary but elective, and that the Estates General had power not only to choose, but to depose, the King. His excursus on the Salic law and the miseries which the rule of women had, in ancient times, brought to France, was filled with what every reader felt to be deadly allusions to Catherine. "The Political Dialogue" began a striking trio of pamphlets by an account of an alleged conversation of a certain Chevalier Poncet, introduced to the King and Catherine by her Italian favorite, Birague.

[1] Rel. I, 2, p. 172 (1547); de l'Estoile, I, 187.

Poncet, who was a great traveller, describes the best method to make the kings of France as absolute as the sultans of Turkey. A pretended answer, entitled "The Antidote," gave a chance for a new attack called "The Rock Cristal Spectacles," which directly charged the alleged Poncet with persuading the King to St. Bartholomew and to a number of poisonings to carry out the plan of replacing the nobility, the natural guards and limits of the King's authority, by janissaries. "The Appeal for Liberty against Tyrants" was an abstract discussion of the right of resistance. Similar pamphlets whose tone is indicated by their titles were "Turkish France or the Anti-Machiavelli," "The Tocsin against the Massacrers," "The Discourse on the Method of Ruling Well," "Concerning the Right of Magistrates," etc.

An additional motive for this transference of the controversy to the field of abstract politics and the open or concealed attack on the influence of Catherine and her Italian advisers, was the desire to make a close alliance with the new party of the Malcontents or Politiques—moderate Catholics headed by Francis Montmorency, eldest son of the dead Constable. It has often been asserted that the Huguenot movement was essentially a political rebellion cloaked by religion. It is true, on the contrary, that after twelve years of struggle a rebellion in the defense of religious doctrines or for their propagation, began to seek finally a political theory for its justification. This judgment on the true inwardness of the Huguenot movement seems to be made certain by the fact that, twelve years later, when the murder of Henry III made the Huguenot leader, Henry of Navarre, hereditary King and the majority of the nation were opposed to crowning a heretic, the Huguenot political writers abruptly took up the theory of divine right while their antagonists, the Jesuits, defended the national sovereignty by all the arguments of the "Franco Gallia" and "The Appeal for Liberty against Tyrants." [1]

[1] De Thou, V, 14; d'Aubigné, IV, 189; Armstrong, Eng. Hist. Rev., IV, 13.

There was a worse danger confronting Catherine than the renewal of the revolt of the Huguenots, inflamed with a hatred more terrible than any the war had yet developed—a danger as yet unknown to her. Rebellion had broken out in her own family and her youngest son, the Duke of Alençon, was thinking of heading a revolution. Immediately after the massacre, a messenger was sent to Elizabeth from the Count of Montgomery, who had escaped from it by the speed of his horse, urging the continuance of the plan to marry Alençon. He was to tell the Queen from the Duke that what had happened in Paris was so entirely without his assistance or consent that he had lost in it some of his household and many of his friends. If the Queen would marry him, the whole of Normandy, both Catholic and Protestant, would follow him and come over to the English Crown. Later a letter from Alençon himself assured Elizabeth he wanted "to become leader of the Protestants of the world against all comers." This assurance that Alençon had nothing to do with the massacre is true. No reporter mentions his name in connection with it and Corbinelli, an exiled Florentine, wrote from the court: "Anjou was always much attached to Guise, the other (brother) to Montmorency and this I believe was the reason why in connection with the great night 'Cœlo te solum Phœbe relinquens' is to be noticed." The line is quoted from Catullus' Epithalamium on the marriage of Thetis and Peleus. Apollo would not come to the wedding and this is a typical humanist way of saying that Alençon had nothing to do with the massacre.[1]

During the siege of La Rochelle the reckless lad (he was only nineteen) discussed with the sixteen-year-old Viscount of Turenne all sorts of plans. Now they wanted to carry off the four hundred ex-Huguenot gentlemen in the camp and raise the standard of general revolt, now they planned to desert to the Rochellois, now to embark on the auxiliary

[1] Cal. F. 1572, p. 174, 175, pntd. de la Ferrière (3), Rajna. pntd. 24-38.

fleet which Montgomery, without the official knowledge of Elizabeth, had prepared in England and brought to the relief of La Rochelle. Turenne writes in his memoirs that once when he had hidden in the sleeve of his shirt a note to be smuggled to the commander of La Rochelle, the treason was nearly discovered, for his master's next older brother, the Duke of Anjou, took him playfully by the arm and felt the paper. He unbuttoned his cuff and took it out, but Turenne, seeing his terrible danger, at once sprang upon him and took it away, saying that it was a letter which had come from a woman at court and he wouldn't let him see the handwriting for anything in the world.[1]

Meanwhile Catherine, in entire ignorance of this dangerous disposition of her youngest son, was continuing her plans for the greatness of her second son, the Duke of Anjou, and backing with all her ability his candidacy for the throne of Poland. It was necessary to conciliate the vote, not only of the Protestant Polish nobles but of the Protestant princes of Germany. She used Gaspard Schomberg, brought up as a page in her household and now a colonel of royal German mercenaries, as her secret agent among them. At first they refused to accept the official explanations of St. Bartholomew. But, as time went on, they evidently went through the same course of reasoning as Elizabeth and began to feel that, although these statements were manifestly false, it would be better to act as if they were true. Some of them, therefore, used their influence privately in favor of the election of the Duke of Anjou. The Landgrave of Hesse sent word to Catherine that, because of his great friendship for her husband, he would always remain her friend and the friend of all Frenchmen, and the letters which he wrote to the widow of the previous King of Poland were of great help to Anjou's candidacy. Catherine was also helped by one of the many dwarfs whom she had always kept in her court, a Pole by the name of

[1] Bouillon (Turenne), 386, 388.

Crasosky, who had returned to Poland shortly before with a competency.[1]

In another quarter the diplomatic agents of Catherine met with less success in re-establishing the conditions that had been destroyed by St. Bartholomew. The French Ambassador at Constantinople was on his way home after having negotiated a treaty with Turkey against Spain, by which the Sultan agreed to put at the command of the King of France a fleet of 200 galleys. The news of St. Bartholomew, which met him as he reached the shores of the Adriatic, struck him like a thunder bolt. He wrote to one of the secretaries of state that the King had thrown away the chance of destroying forever the power of Spain and becoming "the greatest arbiter of princes whom Europe had seen for a thousand years." Supposing of course that France intended to throw herself into the arms of Spain in a movement for the suppression of Protestantism in Europe, he did two things, started back to Constantinople where he thought his presence would now be necessary and forwarded to Catherine the draft of the treaty, writing her: "Sell this agreement very dear to those to whom, if it had been carried into execution, it would have brought total ruin" (the Spaniards). On his return to Constantinople he was ordered to urge the Sultan to promote the election of the brother of the King of France to the throne of Poland, by sending word that if the nobles elected any other king "he would be his enemy forever." But the Sultan naturally thought that St. Bartholomew was the sign that France was about to make a close alliance with Spain. The best the French Ambassador could ever get was a letter from the Grand Vizier, recommending the Polish nobles to choose one of their own number for king, with the paragraph that, in case they couldn't do this, Turkey would not be averse to seeing the election of the brother of the King of France, his friend and ally.[2]

[1] De Thou, IV, 744; B. N. C. C. C. I, 338; Neg. Lev., III, 306.
[2] Noailles, pntd. I, 30; Neg. Levant, III, 315; Noailles, II, 245, 249, 251.

CHAPTER XXX

THE POLISH CROWN. GRANDIOSE PLANS

The siege of La Rochelle was of course a great hindrance to the negotiations among the German princes in favor of Anjou's candidacy for the throne of Poland, and Catherine used every effort to assure them that the city was besieged, not at all for religious reasons, but simply because it had refused to obey the King. She was very anxious therefore to get a capitulation as soon as possible. The King wrote his brother that he would do anything that was the least bit reasonable to get possession of the city. But he also told him that he wanted to escape from that subjection in which he had up to the present point in his reign been held and to be able to reign as an absolute king, like his predecessors. Catherine explained what this meant in a conversation with the Venetian Ambassador: "We want to see if we can arrange peace without permitting the practice of their religion. We do not want for the present to lay any burden upon consciences, but only to stop these congregations from meeting; which will be to take away the germs of all trouble." At the same time Catherine had no idea of having any cruelty exercised at La Rochelle when it surrendered. She indignantly repudiated the suggestion of the Florentine Ambassador that they should give him a good number of the Huguenot prisoners to row the Duke's galleys and forbade him even to speak to the King about it.[1]

The only difficulty about this plan of the King was that the besieged people and their allies through the south of France would not adopt it, and the alternate suggestion that the city should be taken by assault, its fortifications

[1] B. N. Nouvs. Acqs., 6002 f. 44, f. 127; It., 1728 f. 27, f. 5.

dismantled and the entire royal army then sent to subdue the revolt in Languedoc, was blocked, not only by the desperate resistance of the besieged, but also by the quarrels which lamed the action of the royal forces. The most serious of these quarrels was that between the Duke of Anjou and his younger brother, the Duke of Alençon, which became so violent that his mother and brother tried to think of some excuse to recall Alençon from the camp. This quarrel among her sons was to bring Catherine what was doubtless the greatest sorrow and disappointment of her life and to reopen in a new and more dangerous form those wars about religion which she had hoped to end by the massacre of St. Bartholomew. But it was some months before she suspected how far this bitter rivalry between her own children had gone.[1]

Catherine was very much agitated during this desperate siege by the thought of the danger which her sons ran and she wrote to Marshal Cossé twice to warn them not to expose themselves unnecessarily. They would, probably, listen to him because, having fought with their father, "he knew what was becoming in a prince on the field of battle." The news of the death of the Duke of Aumale, killed in the trenches, threw her into a perfect anguish of fear. She wrote again to Cossé, Montpensier, and Nevers to prevent her sons, if necessary by force, from exposing themselves and running the risk of common soldiers. But in spite of her anguish, Catherine stood firmly by her resolution not to offer any terms but liberty of conscience with the suppression of heretic worship and the banishment of all the ministers.[2]

This resolution was changed by the arrival of what she regarded as extraordinarily good news. When one of her ladies-in-waiting came into her room and said, "I salute you as the mother of the King of Poland," Catherine began

[1] B. N. It. 1728 f. 12, Nouvs. Acqs. 6003 f. 63; Arch. Vat., 28 June, 30 May, 1573.
[2] Letts. IV, 160, 166, 175, 180, 183, 207, 210.

to weep for joy. It was an unexpected victory over the three other candidates in the field and to obtain it the Bishop of Valence had been obliged to make all sorts of promises to the electors. The new king was bound to bring all his French revenues, about four hundred thousand florins, to Poland and to spend them for the benefit of the state. He must pay the state debt out of his own money and also the back pay for the army. He must arm a fleet on the Baltic and bring to Poland four thousand Gascon harquebusiers, whose pay must be furnished for one year by France. He must restore to its ancient splendor the Academy of Cracow, bringing the best professors from France and Italy and he must also pay the expenses each year of a hundred young Polish gentlemen who were to be sent to finish their education in France. He further agreed to such restrictions upon the royal power that what was offered him was "in truth nothing but the presidency for life of a republic, under the title of a king." Even under the best conditions the possession of the crown of Poland was for the heir apparent of the throne of France nothing but an encumbrance and an expense. Catherine had been warned of this by Marshal Tavannes, the best living soldier of France, who had been in the royal service ever since as a mere boy he was taken prisoner with her father-in-law Francis I at the battle of Pavia.[1]

But Catherine's shrewdness was always in abeyance whenever her ambition for her children was at stake and this was particularly the case with Anjou, who was the "apple of her eye and the darling of her soul." She treated Tavannes' common sense as if it were rustic simplicity and wrote to her son: "*Le bon homme* doesn't want to go beyond his own dung hill or to see you too great as long as he lives. I should be of his opinion if I didn't love your honor and grandeur more than my pleasure, for I am not one of those mothers who love their children selfishly; I love you in order to see you the first in grandeur and honor

[1] Noailles L. ctd. 346; B. N. It. 1728 f. 29; Noailles, II, 331. See N.

and reputation. . . ." Reasons for stopping the civil war based on general considerations of the good of the kingdom of France had seemed insufficient to Catherine, but as soon as she heard that her second son was elected King of Poland she felt at once that it was now better to close the siege of La Rochelle, at any cost. The King agreed with her, for he was envious of the military reputation which his brother had already won by the battles of Moncontour and Jarnac and anxious to have him go to Poland. He therefore offered very fair terms to the three associated cities of La Rochelle, Montauban and Nismes. Their inhabitants were to have the free exercise of their religion. All Protestants in the kingdom were to have complete oblivion for everything. All gentlemen of the new religion had the right to have their marriage ceremonies performed and their children baptized in their own way. Any who were not content had full liberty to sell or rent their property and live outside the kingdom. These terms were afterwards extended to the town of Sancerre, which had endured a long blockade in which the inhabitants had eaten chopped straw cooked in candle grease, saddles and straps boiled, the grated horns of oxen and goats and even the feet of wild boars, which had been nailed up for years as hunting trophies.[1]

This peace did not end the war, which during these two sieges had spread sporadically over all the south of France, where the Huguenots held about sixty fortified places. The causes of this sporadic and scattered revolt were not simply religious. The discipline of the royal troops was so bad that they plundered right and left, friend as well as foe, and the cities were afraid to receive them in garrison. This discontent was increased by the great pressure of taxation. The estates of Brittany demanded release from it and in Languedoc the rebels were supported by many Catholics whose demands included the reduction of taxation to what it was in the time of Louis XI. The discontent with taxa-

[1] Rel. I, 4, pp. 258, 305; Neg. Tosc., III, 644, 879; Arch. Vat. Fr., I, 208; Letts. IV, 181, 195; Fontanon, d'Aubigné, IV, 166; de Thou, IV, 758.

tion was enormously emphasized by the pressure of famine, caused by the universal failure of the harvest brought about by the incessant rain. The great rise in the price of bread made Catherine appoint the first president of the Parlement of Paris head of a commission to investigate its causes. He reported that the root of the trouble was "the avarice of the merchants of this city" who had been buying from the seigneurs for future delivery on small advances and then selling their options. "Unlawful things have been done in this speculation which has enormously enriched the dealers and they ought to be punished." Acting on the laws against the monopoly of grain, he compelled the sale of a part of the wheat with which one man had filled his house from garret to cellar. But such expedients were only temporary relief for a situation which depended upon other causes beside the vices of men.[1]

The ceremonies connected with the reception of the Polish delegates sent to notify the King of his election, gave Catherine an opportunity for one of those great public entertainments, which, together with the laying out of gardens and planning of new palaces, seem to have been the chief distractions of her laborious life. The newly elected King made a solemn entry into Paris in a procession that was a blaze of color. It was followed by a magnificent supper given by the Queen Mother in her new palace of the Tuileries with a garden fête. As a needless display of extravagant hospitality, Catherine had cut down a number of great trees in order to make place for a pavilion. In it there was held a masque: a large silvered rock was promenaded through the company, on niches of which there were seated sixteen young ladies of the court dressed to represent the provinces of France. They descended from the rock, recited verses and danced a ballet, first masked and then unmasked. A ball followed and, used as they were to the lavish hospitality of their own country, the Poles

[1] B. N. It. 1728 f. 16, 39, 95, 129, fds. fr. 3224 f. 82, 105, 3246 f. 23; Nouvs. Acqs., 6001 f. 76, 6002 f. 88; C. C. C. 7 f. 491; A. N. K. 1531 f. 93, 1532 f. 70; Cal. F. 1573, p. 395; Arch. Vat., 15 May.

admitted that they had never seen anything to compare with the magnificence of this entertainment.[1]

Of course all this cost money and although Henry refused to swear to two of the articles confirmed by his Ambassador, that he would pay the debts of the kingdom and bring all his revenues to be spent there, the initial expenses of the new King were enormous. Fifty thousand florins were distributed among the ambassadors. The single item of jewels was a heavy one. Some of the finest jewels of the crown were in pawn in Italy and Catherine vainly tried to get them released without paying the sums due. In spite of this, however, she was able to hand over a rather big jewel casket to her best loved son. For some months before the election she had been considering the purchase at Venice of a large number of pearls. She now decided to take them, 151 at a hundred écus apiece, to be paid for in a year. At this rate the money which was voted by the assembly of the clergy, eight hundred thousand crowns for the journey of the King of Poland, two hundred thousand crowns to the Queen Mother, did not go very far and the pressure of taxation increased. A tax was laid on woolen cloth, every bale of which had to be sealed before it could be sold, and new taxes were levied on Paris. Rioting was feared in Paris, and, throughout the kingdom, discontent enormously increased. It was directed against the Italians into whose hands Catherine had confided the management of her finances. The overwhelming Italian influence in planning St. Bartholomew was perfectly well understood by this time and the enormous wealth gained in a few years by Catherine's favorites was the cause of great suspicion, which had been growing ever since the Estates of Orleans asked Francis II to promote in his service French gentlemen rather than foreigners.[2]

Certainly there was good reason for the suspicion of

[1] Noailles, qtd., II, 375; Arch. Vat., 29 Sept.; de Thou, V, 8; d'Aubigné, IV, 178; B. N. It. 1728 f. 132.

[2] Letts. IV, 153, 254, 268; B. N. It. 1728 f. 116; Cal. F. 1573, p. 359; Haton, II, 740; A. N. K. 1532 f. 71.

undue favoritism on the part of Catherine. Birague had come to France as a poor Milanese lawyer; he had only taken out naturalization papers eight years before and he was now succeeding the great l'Hospital as Chancellor of France. Twelve of his relatives had received offices in the service of the state. Orazio Rucellai represented a younger branch of the great banking firm of Lyons, Florence and Constantinople. He had been in France only seven years, but he was now the Queen's right hand man in finance and had already gone far in making those profits which enabled him after twenty-three years, to carry back to Italy the enormous fortune of seventeen hundred thousand livres. Sardini was a native of Lucca, who had established a bank at Lyons at the beginning of the reign of Henry II. He had married, as we have seen, that one of Catherine's young women-in-waiting who had been the mistress of the Prince of Condé. He entered into Catherine's service and she used him continually in financial affairs, granting him at the same time all sorts of privileges and concessions. He had a handsome hôtel opposite the royal château at Blois. Ajaceto, who came to France with a very modest sum of money, became, through Catherine's favor, the head of the custom house and was able at his marriage to settle three or four hundred thousand écus on his wife. Antonio Gondi came to Lyons in his youth and engaged in commerce, his widow became a favorite of Catherine who made one of her sons general of the galleys of France, another bishop of Paris, and a third Duke and Marshal.

The general dislike of Italians, as leeches of the kingdom, had, some time before, begun to take the form of epigrams like this one on Sardini: "They who were once sardines have now become great whales; so do the little fishes of Italy flourish in France." The dislike of them was now beginning to take a very much more dangerous form. In the middle of the summer Camille Strozzi, one of Catherine's protégés, wrote her a memoir on the necessity of

[1] Picot, E. 37 ff. 132, 135; de l'Estoile, I, 354.

putting a stop to the rumor which was current that a St. Bartholomew was ready to be executed upon all the Italians in France. It is doubtful whether Catherine was too much concerned about all this. Even in the most serious financial crises, she had always been reckless about her personal expenses and she died leaving her own affairs in great disorder. She probably regarded the election to the Polish throne as a family matter anyway and continued to spare no expense in regard to it. As to the anti-Italian feeling, she felt sure that she had a sufficient force of guards to prevent it from becoming too dangerous to any of her favorites.[1]

It was always the case with Catherine that, where her children were concerned, the horizon of possibility spread to her imagination far beyond the limits of fact. She now became absorbed in the dream of making the throne of Poland a stepping stone to something higher. What if she, "the merchant's daughter," who had risen to be the mother of kings and queens, should become the mother of an emperor and put her darling Henry into a position which would give him the ceremonial precedence over all the potentates of the earth? This was not a new idea to Catherine, but after the Polish election it began to take definite shape in her mind. She thought she could probably count, in case of the death of the Emperor, on three out of the seven electors of Germany. But if the Imperial crown was to be won it could only be done by some sort of a combination between the German Protestants and the moderate Catholics. She had known for some months that Philip of Spain was trying to play precisely the same game. In order to gain the title of King of the Romans (the elected heir apparent to the empire) he had promised to reunite the Netherlands to the empire, to remove all Spaniards from them, and to pardon and restore the Prince of Orange. This would extend to the Netherlands the edict of toleration which then prevailed in the Empire. It was of course

[1] De l'Estoile, I, 20; B. N. Bib. du Roy, 8677, 2.

not only ambition, but also self defense for France to oppose this plan.[1]

The best way to oppose it would have been to back a German Protestant or moderate Catholic for the office of Emperor, but Catherine had preferred to consider the possibility of renewing the league with the Prince of Orange which had been rejected before the massacre of St. Bartholomew and apparently destroyed forever by that event. She had begun by allowing Louis of Nassau to enroll harquebusiers secretly in France and she had also promised him a subsidy. In addition she offered to enter into a league with the German princes if they would declare openly for the Prince of Orange. On receiving this hint, the Prince of Orange offered to France the following terms: if France would declare openly for him, the provinces of Holland and Zealand would swear allegiance to the French Crown at once, with the condition that both Protestant and Roman Catholic worship should always be free in them. Or, if the King of France would lend him secretly 300,000 écus, he would promise to transfer to his allegiance immediately any cities he might capture and, at the end of the war, the provinces of Holland and Zealand. He would also agree not to make peace with the King of Spain without the consent of the King of France.[2]

In transmitting these offers to the Queen Mother her agent Schomberg wrote:

"MADAME:

"The safety of the state, the ruin of the chief enemy of the King, the firm alliance of the German princes, the overthrow of all the designs of the House of Austria and the sum of all you desire, is now in your hands. If you let this splendid prize escape I do not believe you will ever have another chance to get it." At that time, however, Catherine, whatever verbal offers she might make, had no real intention of doing anything which would provoke the

[1] A. N. K. 1531; Arch. Vat. 2 Dec., 1573; Groen, IV, 30; Letts. IV, 198.
[2] Groen, IV, 50.

King of Spain to war. This resolution was confirmed, perhaps caused, by the written advice of one of her most trusted counselors, Morvillier, president of the council, who had been so influential in leading the council to reject Coligny's plan for war against Spain before St. Bartholomew. He said that neither the German princes nor Orange were to be trusted and that France was not strong enough to fight Spain. He advised, therefore, giving a friendly answer to the agent of the Prince of Orange but doing nothing else. In spite of the secrecy in which this intrigue was conducted, Spain suspected something and succeeded in buying the illegitimate son of one of the German princes who was acting as one of Catherine's agents among them, so that he was regularly reporting to Spain. Catherine suspected this, however, and ordered the courier of the Spanish Embassy stopped on the road and robbed of his dispatches. What she read made her throw the spy into prison, though she thought it better not to take any other step against him. Spain complained bitterly of this violation of rights, but Catherine told the Ambassador that the courier had been plundered by the Huguenots.[1]

Of course, in any attempt to beat Spain in a future election for the Empire, the marriage of the new King of Poland might prove of the greatest importance and Catherine consulted the Venetian Ambassador about it. Now Venice would have been very much afraid of the King of Spain on the throne of the Empire, and, remembering the League of Cambray, did not want a close alliance between France and Spain. Her Ambassador therefore advised Catherine that the daughter of the Duke of Saxony would be the best match for her son. When she asked him "what shall we do about religion?" he told her that could easily be arranged. When the Emperor Charles V sent word to Maurice of Saxony that he must become a Catholic, Maurice replied, "If the Emperor will make me an Elector, I will be

[1] Groen, IV, 43, 117; B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 6002 f. 74 fds. fr. 3318; It. 1728 f. 22, 25.

of any religion he wants me to be." In the same way, the Ambassador continued, his descendant will become a Catholic in order to become the wife of the King of Poland. "The Queen Mother laughed at these examples" and sent the Huguenot Fregoso, who had so often been her messenger to the Protestants, to push the marriage. It was the common gossip at the court that her object was to further the chance of the King of Poland as a candidate at the next Diet of the Empire to the title of King of the Romans. At the same time she expressed the utmost surprise when the Ambassador of Spain, in an interview in the garden of the Tuileries, indignantly charged her with making peace with La Rochelle in order to intrigue with the German princes and Orange for a secret attack upon Flanders.[1]

The situation at the French court and the secret of Catherine's character, which from whatever angle you approach it, nearly always displays the same dominant traits, is shrewdly described at this crisis in a report of de Lumbres who had visited her as an agent of Louis of Nassau: "The best way to keep the Queen Mother in your interest is to write letters to the King saying everything possible of her honesty and usefulness and the necessity of keeping the administration in her hands: only of course this must be done cleverly and naturally. Similar letters must be written to her urging her, now that the departure of her two sons is about to leave her alone, to watch very closely the council of the King in order to prevent avarice, ambition and party feelings from destroying everything on the pretense of the public good, urging upon her also that this authority belongs to her by the right of nature." As a matter of fact, after the brief attempts to emancipate himself from his mother's control in the conspiracy of Tuscany and under the influence of the Admiral, the King followed her lead with great docility, and Catherine "carried the weight of all public business." To any suggestion that

[1] B. N. It. 1728 f. 33; Cal. F. 1573, p. 395; Arch. Vat., 12 July, 1573.

she might lose her authority in the state she was abnormally sensitive.[1]

There was now a strong and repeated demand for the assembly of the Estates General to reform justice and the finances and because of the universal discontent with taxation. Catherine was very much opposed to this meeting because, in the first place, financial accounts would then have to be rendered and, in the second place, she might meet another attempt like that she had defeated with the help of Coligny at Pontoise in 1561, to deprive her of authority. It was therefore given out at first, that there would be a nominated assembly to which nobody could come unless summoned by the King and that the governors of the provinces and deputies from the Parlements of the kingdom would be called. Even this limited assembly was postponed from time to time and finally simmered down to representatives of the Parlement of Paris and some fifteen delegates from various provinces, to whom the King expressed his strong intention of reforming justice and all the other abuses of which his people complained.[2]

But it was easier to dodge the representatives of the nation than it was to appease the troubles of the kingdom. The scattered remains of the Huguenot insurrection of the south were consolidating and spreading into a civil war and the demands of the Huguenots, who felt that the crown was not prepared to reduce them to subjection, were exceedingly strong. A confederation of nobles and cities which received the popular name of "The Brazen-browed" sent three commissioners to present to the King the terms on which they were willing to make peace. They demanded the repudiation of the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the annulment of every legal sentence based upon it, the right of worship throughout the kingdom, judges of their own religion in all cases in which Huguenot interests were involved, freedom

[1] Groen, IV, 166; Arch. Vat. 27 Aug., 8 Dec., 1573; Dispacchi Salviati, f. 890.

[2] B. N. It. 1728 f. 15; Arch. Vat. Dec. 15; A. N. K. 1532 f. 94; Neg. Tosc., III, 890, 893, 894, 899.

from the payment of tithes except to their own ministers, the right to keep under their own guard all the cities they held and, in addition, two cities of surety given them in each province where they now held none. When she heard these demands, Catherine called out in anger, "If the Prince of Condé were alive at the head of 20,000 horse and 50,000 foot and had just taken Paris or half the cities of the kingdom, he wouldn't have demanded half of these insolent articles." [1] From the point of view of suppressing the possibility of civil war this was the final outcome of the blundering crime of St. Bartholomew.

There were other troubles besides these public ones. The court was filled with violent hatreds, which caused bloody quarrels, and assassination became more common than ever. The courtiers were not slow to follow the example which had been set them by their sovereigns. The Nuncio wrote: "They are introducing very rapidly that pestiferous custom of avenging injuries with harquebus shots, a thing which, a few years before, was not even known in this nation." One night when the King was coming home with only the Duke of Guise in his company, a harquebus was fired at them from a house near by. It was generally believed that the shot was meant for Guise, but Catherine begged her son not to go out in the city any more without his guard.[2]

The King could have had but little influence in repressing this growing habit of cowardly vengeance, because he set such a bad example. The Provost of Paris, Nantouillet, grandson of a former Chancellor of France, who had a handsome house across the Seine, opposite the Louvre, had been offered marriage with Mademoiselle de Rieux, called La Belle Châteauneuf, a young woman of good family, who had been the mistress of the new King of Poland when he was only the Duke of Anjou. The marriage had been made advantageous from the financial point of view and such

[1] D'Aubigné, IV, 185.
[2] Arch. Vat. 5 Sept., 1574; B. N. It. 1728 f. 114.

matches were not uncommon, but Nantouillet refused and even dared to say he could not be bribed to pay with his honor for the pleasure of another. The King of Poland, angered at this contemptuous refusal, went one night after a terrible debauch with the King his brother, his bastard half-brother, the King of Navarre, the Duke of Guise and some other young seigneurs of the court to Nantouillet's house. Gaining admission on some excuse, they proceeded to insult him, to destroy his furniture and to cut up his tapestries. Meanwhile their servants carried off all his silver plate, broke open chests and even took all the money upon which they could lay their hands. The royal and noble ruffians nearly met their fate. It so happened that there was at the very time, hidden in a room in the upper part of the house, the Provost's brother, Baron Viteaux, with four bandits, "bad men" (gens de mains), watching his chance to avenge the murder of his brother committed ten years before by a favorite of the Duke of Anjou. The murderer for fear of Viteaux's vengeance had left the kingdom for a long while and on his return lived far from the court in Auvergne. Viteaux knew, however, that the King of Poland had just recalled him to Paris in order to take him to Poland. This desperate band of men, hearing the noise in the house, and thinking it was the police, stood to their arms. If the door of their room had been broken open, as other doors were, they would undoubtedly have killed everything that stood before them without waiting to look. A little later Viteaux got his chance and killed his enemy, as he was coming out of the house of the Duke of Nevers at full noon surrounded by twelve guards.[1]

These desperate hatreds and jealousies were now deep-seated in the royal family itself. Catherine's children had caught the infection of that morbid pride which brought even her strong affection to its sharpest point in the continuous effort to obtain new dignities for them. No one of

[1] De l'Estoile, 12, p. 384; d'Aubigné, IV, 179; Comp. III, 356; de Thou, 381.

them showed much taste for the labors of administration or the effort of joining in counsel. The King, although he loved to dabble in literary pleasures, was almost absorbed by a passion for hunting and other violent exercises. The Duke of Anjou was always surrounded by a bevy of court ladies. But no pleasure could ever distract any of the sons of Catherine from the torment of knowing that any other human being was more distinguished in the public eye than he was. This ambitious and envious disposition had already produced an open break between her second and third sons, which had led the latter into secret treason. A break, but a less open one, now appeared between her eldest and her second son.

When the King of Poland made his triumphal entry into Paris, paintings on the gates and bridges represented the three brothers, of whom one wore the crown of France, the other the crown of Poland, while an angel was reaching down toward the head of the third with the crown of England. All were bound together by a series of knots which symbolized the strength of the fraternal affection which united them, but this allegorical allusion was the very opposite of the facts. The King's jealousy had before been stirred by the military glory gained by his brother in the Huguenot war and it was manifest that he did not care very much for all this honor which was now being shown him. Alençon became very restless at the idea that his crown was still in the air and insisted on going to England to push his wooing of Elizabeth, while Henry, although very much flattered by his new title of King, was not in any hurry to leave the pleasures of the French court to take up his duties in what seemed to him little short of banishment. This disposition was strengthened by the members of the House of Guise, who did not want him to leave the kingdom because his younger brother, who would succeed to his influence, was hostile to them and friendly with the Montmorencies. The King, on the other hand, was anxious to get him away as soon as possible and angered at the

mere thought of his disobedience. Believing that Villequier, one of his brother's gentlemen, was very active in persuading him to stay in France, the King went to the man's room with a few of his gentlemen in order to punish him. Fortunately he was not there and, hearing that the King was hunting for him, he hid until Catherine persuaded her eldest son not to make a scandal over the matter.[1]

She had already tried to check the King of Poland in his tendency to take the advice of the Guise, to linger in France and to show disobedience to his brother. She wrote to him that for two days after announcement of the news of his election, the Guise went around looking very sad. Finally when the Cardinal of Guise and his brother the Duke were walking with her, the Cardinal had said: "They must be very sad over this news at the camp." His brother, who was much craftier, made him a sign to shut up. "I said: 'Yes, they're sorry that he must go, but they're not sorry that he has been made a king.' " She closed her letter, "I write you all this because I see that people are anxious to have us lose this great honor now that we've got it in our hands, in order to hold you down and to be able to say, 'He's a prince who doesn't care much for princely affairs.' " [2] Henry had to yield to his brother's commands and his mother's counsels, but how little he enjoyed doing so is shown by the following letter which alludes to the strongest reason why he disliked leaving France—his desperate passion for the wife of the Prince of Condé.

"To Madame the Duchess of Nevers:

"I never was so troubled in my life. I beg you as you are my friend, . . . do what you can for me. I beg you this with joined hands and tears in my eyes. You know what it is to love. . . . I could curse everything in the world, I am so filled with rage. I swear to you that for two hours my eyes have not been dried from tears. Have pity on me." [3]

[1] Noailles, II, 377; Cal. F. 1573, p. 393, 414, 419; B. N. It. 1728 f. 95, 119; Rel. I, 6, p. 259; Arch. Vat. Salviati, Sept., 1573.
[2] Letts. IV, 225.
[3] B. N. Nouvs. Acqs., 7734 f. 80.

It is not astonishing that the King of Poland felt that a woman could do so much for him. Since the days of Francis I the influence of woman, and that usually meant the evil influence of woman, had been very strong at the Valois court. It often prevailed in the appointment of prelates. The old fighter Monluc wrote in his memoirs, "Women can do anything at court. I wonder at the brave historians who do not dare to say so." The young Turenne felt that "few things happen at court without women having a hand in them." The Cardinal of Guise wrote: "This court where women manage everything." A Nuncio thought that "the women of this court are the cause of the greater part of the evil which comes out of it." But neither the Duchess of Nevers nor any one else could save Henry from leaving France to take his throne. In the end of 1573, he started in the company of his mother, his sisters and his two brothers, who were to see him to the border to say good-by. But at Vitry the King was taken ill, so they left him there, his mother writing back an affectionate letter to urge him to obey strictly the orders of the doctors. The rest of the family party went with the King of Poland across the territory of his uncle by marriage, the Duke of Lorraine, and finally parted with him at Blamont amid "tears and sobs without end," a lacrimose scene which apparently rivalled the family farewell to Elizabeth of Spain after the interview at Bayonne. But there was one member of the party who could not have shed any very genuine tears. The Duke of Alençon had planned with the King of Navarre to ride off at a certain point on the way home and make their way to the south in order to put themselves at the head of a joint revolt of Huguenots and Politiques. A Catholic gentleman in the suite of the King of Navarre, Monsieur de Miossans, came and told Margaret, who told her mother, making her swear before she revealed the secret that they would not either hurt those concerned, or let anybody know that they had discovered the plan. Catherine quietly arranged the

journey so that the young men never got a chance to leave the party.[1]

Catherine did something else at Blamont besides weep over the departure of her favorite son from France. She and the King of Poland had an interview with Louis of Nassau and promised him that France and Poland would support the cause of the revolt in the Netherlands against Spain, as openly and as strongly as the German princes would. A secret subsidy of 100,000 écus was given to Louis. De Retz, Catherine's right hand man, recently created a marshal, soon after carried the subsidy in silver to Metz, where he concealed it in the inside of tuns of wine and sent it down the river in a boat. He didn't send it all however, for he kept 40,000 francs for his own "pot de vin." In spite of the secrecy of this transaction, Philip was fully aware that, although France was not able to make open war on him because she needed money and was short in her harvest, she was underhandedly aiding his enemy.[2]

[1] Rel. I, 5, p. 45; Margaret, 391; Bouillé, III, 39; Arch. Vat., 30 Mar., 1574; Letts. IV, 266; B. N. It. 1728 f. 162; Chiverny, Margaret, 38.

[2] Groen, IV 278, Louis to his brother; Huguerye, I, 191; A. N. K. 1532 f. 108.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LA MOLE PLOT. THE KING'S DEATH

Apparently Catherine was accustomed to make a good deal of Christmas, but Christmas 1573 could not have seemed a very merry one to her. The trouble in her own household was desperate. Her taciturn youngest son, so close-mouthed that nobody could ever tell what he was thinking about, had never shown capacity for anything—but he was indescribably ambitious and "for the chance of ruling would dare almost any rash enterprise." The revelations of his sister during the farewell journey with her other son, had given her some hint of the desperate plans which were running through the boy's mind. She had purposely kept her oldest son dependent upon herself and he was not grown to enough of a man to master his youngest brother. Catherine was unable to do so, and she felt that she must either content him in some way or he would plunge them into open war with Spain by aiding the Dutch rebellion or appear as standard bearer of a new civil war at home. For a year and a half she had been doing her best to arrange his marriage with the Queen of England. She exhausted all the resources of her flattery to assure her sister of England how proud she would be to become the mother "of the greatest, and most intrepid queen that human eyes had ever seen." But Elizabeth, while she did not say a blunt no, would never say yes, and in her inmost thoughts Catherine must have often feared what the Spanish Ambassador wrote to his master, that, no matter what Elizabeth might say, the whole thing was, on her part, a pretense.[1]

In addition, the old quarrel between the house of Mont-

[1] Letts. IV, 223, 275; A. N. K. 1532 f. 97.

morency and the house of Guise threatened at any moment to burst into a blaze. A sign that the tension between these two great rival families had only been increased by the murder of the Admiral was given one day, when the Duke of Guise, coming down a staircase which led from the rooms of Catherine, met a young courtier by the name of Vantabrun, a former member of his household, who now belonged to the servitors of Alençon. They exchanged a few words and the Duke drew his sword. The courtier turned to run down the staircase, but the Duke followed him, struck him, rolled him down the rest of the stairs and went at once to the room of the King, who was ill in bed, to beg pardon for having killed Vantabrun within the royal palace. He said he had done it because the man had told him that Marshal Montmorency had plotted to assassinate him. This was believed by most observers to be a mere excuse. Vantabrun was arrested and tortured without obtaining any confirmation of Guise's story. After being imprisoned for a time, he was set free under orders to leave the court and was almost immediately assassinated. It was not long after this that the Tuscan Ambassador wrote: "Montmorency wants me to ask Your Highness for a little of that oil you have which is an antidote for poison, together with the directions for using it." [1]

Catherine was as yet unwilling to believe that Alençon was really considering going over to the Huguenots, but she did know that he was siding in a very marked way with the Montmorencys against the Guise; and she finally determined to satisfy the dangerous mood of her youngest son by ostensibly gratifying his ambition. He was appointed Keeper of the Great Seal, Chief of the Royal Council and Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom and orders were sent out that all governors of provinces should report at the same time in duplicate to the King and to him.[2]

[1] Bouillon, 391; de Thou, IV, 31; d'Aubigné, IV, 214; Neg. Tosc. III, 900, 904; B. N. It. 1728; Arch. Vat., Cal. F. 1574, p. 468.
[2] B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 32506.

These family arrangements did not, however, appease the great discontent in the kingdom, now sharpened by the fact that the failure of the harvest had made the price of bread higher than it had been in the memory of any living man. On the one hand, the nobles of Burgundy, who were not Huguenots, sent in a petition demanding that ignorant young priests should no longer be appointed; that all priests should have only one parish and live in the parsonage, and that the laws against blasphemy should be strictly enforced. It went on to say that the taxes were intolerable; although Burgundy was only one-thirty-second of the kingdom, it paid one-sixth of all the taxes. The people were unable to pay their landlords and were even fleeing from the country because of the weight of taxes and the plundering of the royal troops. On the other hand the anger and suspicion of the Huguenots was very much increased at the beginning of the year by the discovery of a plot to seize their stronghold, La Rochelle, in spite of the truce. The King assured them that he knew nothing of this plan, but the Venetian Ambassador did not believe him and still less the Huguenots. In consequence they began to take arms and by the beginning of the spring they were in open insurrection in Poitou, Guienne, Limousin and Languedoc.[1]

Catherine had no wish whatsoever to renew a war about religion. More than a year before she had been asked by the Pope to join in a plan for the destruction of Geneva, which "had done infinite damage to France and to many other parts of Christendom." Even then in the midst of the war with the Huguenots, she had refused, for much as France disliked to see Geneva in the hands of the heretics, she would have disliked still more to see it in the hands of Savoy or Spain. Her ambassador had since been active in making arrangements by which Geneva was taken under the protection of all the Swiss cantons, Catholic as well as Protestant. When the Nuncio reproached her on the ground

[1] Arch. C. VI, 425; Arch. Vat. 25 Jan., 1574; Arch. Vat. Fr. I, 7 f. 114; B. N. It. 1728 f. 173; Neg. Tosc. III, 908.

that Geneva was a "nest of rebels and a sower of heresy" she frowned and said her Ambassador had nothing to do with it, except he might have told the Bernese that they had done well to take Geneva under their protection. But though Catherine had no desire whatever to renew the wars of religion, she preferred fighting to granting the demands of the Huguenots. They complained that the government was not properly constituted, that the people were oppressed by taxes, that their lives were not safe outside their walled cities and that they were compelled to live like thieves without religion. They demanded the assembly of the Estates-General, the dismissal of all foreigners from government, an examination of public accounts, greater liberty for their worship and six strong cautionary cities put in their hands as a pledge.[1]

Just before these Huguenot demands were presented to the King, Catherine had begun to find out how deeply her youngest son was involved in the plots for the threatened Huguenot-Politique revolt. At the end of February the King, accompanied by his youngest brother, and the King of Navarre, was at St. Germain, near Paris. Suddenly the alarm came that a strong body of Huguenots was within a few leagues of the château. Great confusion followed, the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, who did not want to fall into Huguenot hands, took horse and fled through the falling night to Paris. The drums of the French and Swiss guards beat the alarm, the gates were closed and everybody stood under arms until dawn. Guitry, the leader of this band of horsemen, had been given a rendezvous for a date ten days later, when the King of Navarre and the Duke of Alençon were to join him and put themselves at the head of the Huguenot army. The youthful Viscount Turenne, who was one of the leaders of the conspiracy, has left us a vivid account of what happened that night. Because their man had advanced the date of the meeting, the conspirators

[1] Letts. IV, 153; Arch. Vat. 4 Jan. 15 Feb. 1574; B. N. It. 1728 f. 228; Neg. Tosc. III, 908.

did not know exactly what to do, and when he came into the room of Catherine, the King of Navarre, as he passed, said in Turenne's ear: "Our man has told everything." "Then I approached my uncle Thoré (a younger brother of Marshal Montmorency) and told him to get away at once —that he'd be killed if he stayed and that if they ill-treated us he could avenge our death." Catherine, who had already forced a confession from the feebleness of the Duke of Alençon, left her cabinet and went to the room of the King. "Then I went by the great staircase curious to find out so far as I could what the Duke of Alençon had told her. When I entered I saw de Sauve [a woman of more charm than character who had been intimate with many princes]. She was smiling as if nothing had happened." Leaving her, Alençon said to me: "I haven't said a word about you, but tell your uncle to get away." So much time had passed in alarms and questionings that it was now beginning to be day and young Turenne went to the King and offered to go and find out what these armed strangers wanted. The result of his mission was that their leader came to see the King, and was sent back promising to get his comrades to disperse. Catherine and the King were very much troubled, however, by the affair. The King said he did not know whom he could trust and Catherine became so melancholy that she even talked to the King about retiring from the government. The King made a visible effort to show friendliness to his younger brother and they were seen a great deal together, in company with the King of Navarre.[1]

Not long after there was a new alarm, while the court was at the Castle of Vincennes, the other side of Paris. The gates were shut and doubly guarded and every man who left the castle was searched. That night the militia of the city was put under arms and the next day no mounted or armed man was suffered to pass through the gates. The object of all this was to arrest two gentlemen of the suite

[1] Bouillon, 391; Arch. Vat., 13 Mar., 30 Mar.; A. N. K. 1533 f. 49; B. N. It., 1728 f. 230, 234, 280; Cal. F. 1574, p. 474.

of the Duke of Alençon, de la Mole and Coconnas, and the rumor went round that it had been discovered that the conspiracy included the murder of Catherine and the King. It was further whispered about that Marshal Montmorency had been privy to the plot. Neither the Tuscan, English nor Spanish Ambassador believed that any murder was planned; that it was simply another attempt to get away, but the King was intensely angered at his brother and talked of exemplary punishment in which he was supported by the advice of the Chancellor Birague. Catherine resisted and diverted his anger and in the council made skillful use of her favorite expedient of quoting precedent from French history. It was determined to leave the heads of the plot unpunished, but to take vengeance on the tools. Catherine said to the Spanish Ambassador: "You may be certain that those boys were not to blame, but the men fooled them." He urged her to execute punishment on those who had led astray two princes with milk on their lips and pointed out that her life had been miraculously preserved this time and might be forfeit if she did not make an example.[1]

They had two scapegoats in their hands. Count Coconnas was a Piedmontese nobleman, who had come to France to make his fortune. For some time he had been a paid spy of Spain. His cruelty at St. Bartholomew had gained for him great hatred among the Protestants and great contempt among the Catholics of the court and it is a little strange to find him so close to Alençon in an affair of this kind, but the reckless and impatient lad had no capacity either for handling affairs or for picking men. La Mole was a gentleman of an ancient family of the south of France who had for some time been attached to the service of the Duke of Alençon. During the jealous quarrel which broke out between Henry, now King of Poland, and Alençon in the camp at La Rochelle, he had warmly supported his master and earned the malignant hatred of Henry, who now

[1] Cal. F. 1574, pp. 486, 487; B. N. It. 1728 f. 124, 272, 274; A. N. K. 1535 f. 58, f. 2, f. 59; Letts. V, 177; Rel. I, 4, p. 180; Neg. Tosc. III, 913.

wrote from Poland on hearing of his arrest: "If I ever had joy in my life it was when I heard that La Mole and Coconnas were in the cage. But until I hear that the lord who treated them so sweetly at La Rochelle as his old comrades, has made them dance on the end of a rope, I shall not be entirely satisfied." [1]

Catherine was particularly interested in the fact that La Mole seemed to have been engaged in the practice of sorcery. She evidently suspected that this had been directed against the King and might be the cause of the decline in his health which was now evident to all observers. She sent word that certain rings and an amulet, with characters or letters written upon them, which La Mole wore, should be taken away from him. Orders were given to arrest Cosimo Ruggiero, who had come to Paris four years ago and was the fashionable astrologer, with "a little bit of the magician about him." He had risen rapidly in the favor of the Queen Mother, who finally appointed him teacher of Italian to the Duke of Alençon, and he became particularly intimate with La Mole. Cosimo took refuge in the house of the Tuscan Ambassador just outside the walls of Paris. When a formal demand for his surrender was made, he escaped, manifestly with the connivance of his host. This brought the Ambassador "the hottest kind of a letter from Catherine." [2] She begged him if he knew where Cosimo was to tell, because the matter concerned the health of her son, her own health and the entire kingdom. They caught Cosimo soon afterwards and Catherine immediately sent word that he should be strictly examined about some wax images that were found in the rooms of La Mole. Not content with this, she wrote the following letter to the Attorney General:

"Monsieur le Procureur:

"I send you this by one of my own servants. He will tell you what the lieutenant of the provost told him that Cosimo said

[1] A. N. K., 17 Dec., 1573, 11 Apr. 1574, etc.; Letts. IV, 295 n.
[2] Letts. IV, 295, n. 2; Arch. Vat. 23 Apr.; Neg. Tosc. III, 920.

when he was arrested and in order to get it straight, I have told him to tell it to me and I write it here. The said Cosimo, as soon as he was arrested, asked him if the King was vomiting and if he still bled and if he had pains in his head. . . . Make him tell everything [this meant torture] and send to find the said lieutenant and communicate the present note to the First President of the Court and to President Hennequin, and find out the truth about the King's illness and make him undo it if he has thrown any enchantment on the King to injure his health. Also if he has made any enchantment to cause my son the Duke of Alençon to love La Mole, make him undo the enchantment.

"At eleven o'clock in the evening, the 29th of April, 1574.

"CATERINE." [1]

Gossip said the defense put up by the prisoner was that the figures of wax had not been intended to affect the lungs of the King, but the heart of a certain court lady who had proved obdurate to the charms of La Mole, usually a most successful gallant.[2] Gossip for once had the truth. La Mole, when first put to the torture, denied knowing anything about any figure of wax. But the judges, their zeal sharpened by Catherine's express command to find out if there was any enchantment and to cause the charm to be unsaid, would not accept this denial. After he was unbound from the instruments of torture and set before the fire, they asked him again about this image of wax and he answered: "God! may I die if I've ever made any image of wax against the King." They stripped him again, lashed him up to the rings and put him to the torture, admonishing him to tell the truth. In his torments he cried out: "Gentlemen: I don't know anything else on the damnation of my soul. I don't know anything else by the living God and on my damnation. True Eternal God, my God, I don't know another thing. I don't know whether the image of wax was made for the King and the Queen or not." Asked "where is that image of wax and did Cosimo bring it to you?" he said that the image of wax was to make his mis-

[1] Letts. IV, 297.
[2] B. N. It., 1728 f. 286.

tress love him; that if they'd look at the image they'd see it was the image of a woman. "Cosimo has the image which has two spines driven through the heart."

Asked what it had to do with the sickness of the King: "Put me to death," he said, "if poor La Mole ever thought of such a thing." He begged them to bring Cosimo who would tell them that it was nothing else but what he said.

"Where is that image?" "Cosimo has it and it was made for a woman and I didn't tell Cosimo to do anything else. Cosimo gave the image the blow in the heart."

"Why did he give the image that blow?" "I don't know."

Then they gave him the water torture and bade him again tell the truth. He begged to be unbound because he was unable to speak any more. When he was unbound he promised to speak the truth if they'd put him before the fire. He was put before the fire and told to tell the truth about the image of wax. "I will deny my God," he said, "and pray that He'll damn me eternally, if it was made for any other cause than what I've told you." In spite of this statement of La Mole, Catherine evidently was not satisfied. She let the other astrologers who had been arrested go, but Cosimo was condemned to nine years in the galleys, a term he could hardly survive.[1]

Three men were executed for the conspiracy, François de Tourtay, formerly Secretary of Legation in Turkey, La Mole and Coconnas. Tourtay bore the torture with great constancy. He did not beg for his life like the others and asked only that the King "wouldn't hang him like a thief, but cut off his head like a gentleman." But even he, under the double torture, joined the others in the statement that Marshal Montmorency had been in the plot. Coconnas and La Mole were executed on the 29th of April, 1574, in spite of the fact that Alençon fell on his knees before his mother and begged her for their pardon; or at least, if that were not possible, that they should not be publicly executed

[1]Goulart, pntd. III, 196; B. N. It. 1728 f. 302; Neg. Tosc. III, 929.

because of the great insult to himself. He got the King to grant this last request, but the messenger carrying the royal order found the gate of Paris closed and before it could be opened, both men's heads had fallen. When Alençon heard of this public execution he shut himself up in his room, refusing to eat or to see his mother and bathed in tears.[1]

All the world now knew the terrible situation in the royal family, ominous of fresh misery to France and to Catherine. For the next ten years a large part of her energies were to be absorbed in satisfying the wild and weak ambition of her youngest son and so preventing his cancerous envy of his elder brothers from plunging France into fire and blood.

Three days after the execution of La Mole and Coconnas the King had a hemorrhage. The doctors evidently did not know what it meant and it was the talk of the court that his trouble was to a large extent mental, because he believed that the house of Montmorency was implicated in the plot; although nobody dared to say so openly. Two days later at seven in the morning, an order was given to double the guards of the Castle of Vincennes, where the King was. Marshals Montmorency and Cossé were arrested and lodged in the Bastille, and the King wrote to various governors informing them that they had been concerned in the conspiracies made against his person and his throne. Of Montmorency's living brothers, two shared his prison. The third, Damville, was governor of Languedoc. He had in earlier life shown a tendency to unite with the extreme Catholic party. Nevertheless the King included him in the accusation of conspiracy and sent orders to take him dead or alive to a secretary whom he had dispatched shortly before to confer with the Huguenots of Languedoc. As it would have been impossible for the secretary to take the powerful governor alive, Damville, who knew of the royal order, was justified in suspecting that the intention was to

[1] Goulart, III, 186; B. N. It. 1728 f. 291; A. N. K. 1534; Cal. F. 1574, p. 495.

take him dead. At all events he hanged one of his captains on the suspicion that he was in a plot to poison him.[1]

It was the opinion of all those resident at the court at this time whose letters we have, that the failure to kill or arrest this powerful member of the family saved the life of his brothers. When they found they could not put their hands on him or get him out of the way and that he was manifestly preparing to join the Huguenots of his province if anything happened to his family, Catherine said publicly that the King had never accused him of any wrong and considered him a good servant. We know that this was false, but Catherine was much embarrassed by the situation, for she had intended to secure Damville before she arrested his brothers and had acted on mistaken information that he was already under guard in the south. He remained intractable to threats or flattery and finally received the royal messenger with a tame wolf lying at his side as a watch dog and in the midst of his wild Albanian body-guards, commanded by a giant who was famed for being able to cut a donkey in two with one blow of his cutlass. The envoy thought it better not to present his warrant of arrest, but asked some questions in the name of the King in regard to the conduct of the war against the Huguenots. Damville sent letters back to court denouncing the charge against his brothers as calumny and demanding that they should have a fair trial.[2]

As the King's illness grew worse, Alençon became very much alarmed and told the English Envoy that as soon as the breath was out of his brother's body, he would be shut up in the Bastille with the rest. He was very closely watched, but he thought he could bribe his guard if he had money and begged Elizabeth to send him some. This seemed so reasonable to Lord Burleigh of Elizabeth's council that he made arrangements to get money to the Am-

[1] A. N. K. 1535 f. 69; B. N. fds. fr. 3256 f. 89; Béthune, 8710 f. 740; A. N. K. 1503, Mar. 15, 1565; Nouillac, 39 ctd. A. N. K.; Arch. Vat., 9 May, 1574, Salviati to Como.

[2] Cal. F. 1574, p. 574; Decrue (3), 233, 234.

bassador in France to be given to the Duke. It was to be secretly convoyed by various devices in small sums that amounted altogether to about 20,000 crowns. If the King died, it was to be used to bribe the Duke's guard to let him escape.[1]

Ever since he had been taken ill on the journey to escort his brother towards Poland five months before, the King had been suffering from what in the old popular phrase was called galloping consumption. The doctors knew so little then about tuberculosis that, only a month before, they had told Catherine that, though the King would have a long illness, there was no danger of his death. They now repeated this diagnosis of his case as an ordinary lingering fever from which he would recover. There is reason to believe that the violent excitement of St. Bartholomew had caused a shock to the King's nervous system producing effects upon him which some of those about the court who disapproved of it—and we must remember that most of those about the court did disapprove of it—considered marks of remorse. The Venetian Ambassador has recorded his melancholy aspect, his taciturn habit, the fact that he never looked anybody in the eye and the fears of those around him that his vindictive nature would cause him, now that he had begun to dip his hands in blood, to become not only severe, but cruel. D'Aubigné says he had testimony from great officers of state, all good Catholics, that Charles was given to fits of deep depression in which he broke out into groans and curses until his attendants called for music or recited verses to him.[2]

Henry of Navarre used often in later years to tell to his intimates the following story: Eight days after the massacre a great flock of crows lit and began croaking on the pavilion of the Louvre. The noise made the ladies of the court go out to see them and they expressed their fears to the King. The same night, two hours after the King had gone to bed,

[1] Cal. F. 1574, pp. 503-506.
[2] Letts. X, 335, Corlieu; Rel. I, 4, p. 303; d'Aubigné, IV, 256.

he jumped up, summoned the gentlemen of his chamber, sending to call Henry among the others, to hear in the air a terrible noise of voices crying, groaning and screaming and among them other voices threatening and blaspheming, exactly like what had been heard the night of the massacre. These sounds were so distinct that the King, believing there was some new attack upon the family of Montmorency, had his guards called to go into the city and stop the disorder. But when they reported that the city was in peace and only the air in trouble, he was very much disturbed, principally because this noise was continued, always at the same hour, for seven days.[1] The stories told by the Huguenots of Charles in his death agony seeking relief for the torments of his conscience from his old Huguenot nurse, have no historic support and although we should like to feel that Charles IX, who, after all, was not entirely a bad sort of a man, did feel remorse for his share in St. Bartholomew, we cannot be sure that his fears, his melancholy and his nervousness were the results of anything else but highly strung nerves and decaying lungs.

The day before he died he wrote the following letter; or rather it is more probable that Catherine dictated for him the following letter:

"Monsieur de Matignon [Governor of Normandy]:

"You have heard before of my illness which since a day or so ago is very much increased and I am today in such a condition that I am waiting for what it shall please God to do to me, . . . being entirely ready to conform myself to His holy will. Meanwhile I have begged the Queen my mother that she will have greater care than ever of my kingdom. . . . I desire that she should be obeyed in everything which she may command, as well during my illness as at the time when it shall please God to fulfill His holy commandment upon me, up to the hour when the King of Poland, my brother, who is my legitimate successor, may arrive here and I am certain that you will not fail in any part of your duties to make my subjects recognize the authority of my

[1] See Note.

mother and to keep them in the obedience which they owe to my brother." [1]

Catherine, who a week before Charles' death had written very hopefully of his illness, wrote the day after his death a long letter to her son the King of Poland, now King of France, full of grief and affection:

"My Son:

"I sent you yesterday in great diligence a messenger to bring you piteous news for me who have seen so many of my children die. I pray God to send me death before I see any more die, because I thought I should become desperate to watch such a sight and to see the love which he showed me at his end. He couldn't let me go; he begged me that I should send in all haste to get you and meanwhile, before you arrived, he begged that I should take the administration of the kingdom and wanted me to do severe justice on the prisoners whom he knew were the cause of all the evil of the kingdom . . . and afterwards he said good-by to me and begged me to embrace him, which made me almost die. No man ever died in fuller possession of all his senses, in talking to his brother, to the Cardinal of Bourbon, to the Chancellor, to the secretary, to the captains of the guard, both the archers and the Swiss, commanding them all to obey me as they did himself until your arrival and that he was sure you would want to have it so and always talking of your goodness and that you had always loved him so much and obeyed him and never gave him pain but did the greatest services. For the rest, he is dead, having received the communion in the morning in a comfortable condition and about four o'clock he died, the best Christian that ever was, having received all the sacraments, and the last words which he said were 'My mother.' That couldn't happen without a most extreme sorrow for me and I do not find any other consolation except the hope of seeing you soon here. . . . But since it pleases God that I should be proved and visited by Him in such a way so often, I praise His name and pray Him to give me patience and the consolation of seeing you very soon here . . . and in good health, for if I should lose you, I should have myself buried with you alive because I could not bear this loss also. . . . You know how much I love you and when I think that you will never more leave us that makes me take everything with patience. . . ." [2]

[1] Letts. IV, p. 309, note.
[2] Letts. IV, 310.

CHAPTER XXXII

AGAIN REGENT. THE NEW KING RETURNS

The life of Catherine de Médicis can be divided naturally into three periods. During the first forty years of her life she was able to exert but little political influence. In the second period, which began with the death of her husband in 1559, she succeeded after a brief struggle in making herself the central authority of the French state and had full opportunity to gratify that love of power which every acute observer who knew her in life has noticed as her ruling passion. With the death of Charles IX in 1574 begins the third period of Catherine's life, in which she had to struggle intermittently for dominant influence over the King and just before her death to lose it altogether.

She had been in a certain sense surprised by the death of Charles IX. Up to the very moment it took place the doctors had said her son would recover. But Cheverny, the faithful servitor of her absent son, Henry, King of Poland, had warned her of the danger "during a walk on the wall of the fortress of Vincennes on the side next the park," and she had been enough impressed to allow him secretly to make arrangements to secure the citadels of the chief cities like Orleans from falling into the hands of those who opposed the accession to the crown of the natural heir, the King of Poland. The steps taken by Charles IX a few hours before his death were announced to all the Parlements by letters patent and confirmed by them. This appointment of Catherine as Regent of France until Henry III could return and assume the crown, was unconstitutional, because provision had been made by the Estates of Tours at the end of the fifteenth century that in such a case the regency should be assumed by the princes of the blood, unless otherwise

ordered by the Estates General. But those who objected had no leaders and though there was murmuring there was no one left now to write such articles as were passed by the local Estates at Paris when Catherine forcibly assumed the regency at the death of Francis II, nor to put on record such an assertion of constitutional law as was made by the representatives of the nobility at the Estates General of Pontoise in 1561. The Parlements therefore confirmed the letters patent announcing what had been done. Catherine wrote:

"Although I am oppressed by the natural sorrow of a mother over the loss of the most dear and precious thing in the world —a sorrow which makes me desire to leave all public affairs to find some tranquillity of life—nevertheless, persuaded by the pressing request which my son made to me in his last words to take up the office of regent for the good of this crown to which I recognize I am bound by gratitude for all that which God has given me, I feel constrained to accept this office." [1]

Of the chief leaders of the former Huguenot armies the only one left was the Count of Montgomery, who had escaped St. Bartholomew because he was lodged across the Seine and had swift horses. He had reached England in safety, and Elizabeth had refused to surrender him, quoting in support of her refusal a remark of Catherine's husband when Queen Mary had asked him to surrender some English fugitives: "I do not wish to act as executioner for the Queen of England." Some three months before the death of the King, Montgomery had landed in Normandy, of which he was one of the leading nobles, and for a short time had met with astonishing success in raising the country and seizing important cities. From the very first, Catherine and the King had regarded this particular revolt with great alarm and had used every means to capture Montgomery. Five days before the King died, Montgomery, surprised

[1] Cheverny, 60; Arch. Vat. Salviati, 2 June, 1574; Neg. Tosc. IV, 12; Letts. V, 1, 13.

with a small escort, was taken prisoner. Catherine ordered him tried for treason before the Parlement of Paris, which condemned him to death. Her enemies asserted that she sent him to the scaffold because he had caused her husband's death in the fatal tournament. There is no reason to believe this. Henry II, who had forced Montgomery to run the last course, had freely pardoned him and there is no proof that Catherine blamed him for the accident for which he was in no way responsible. She was indeed very anxious to have him sent to Paris, but the probability is that she merely wanted to get out of him by torture the facts about the relations of the Huguenots to England; in which she failed. The Venetian Ambassador, who generally knew Catherine much better than any other of the diplomatic corps, was of the opinion that she would not have executed him at all, if she had not been anxious to please the people of Paris, from whom she expected large grants of money. The only great Huguenot noble to die on the scaffold met death like a man. He was silent under the torture, which was a very rare thing. On the scaffold, he said that the two imprisoned marshals had nothing to do with his revolt and denied that he was a traitor. He added: "My children have just been declared in the reading of the sentence deprived of the rank of nobles. Tell them that, if they have not enough ability to restore themselves to it, I consent to their degradation." Then refusing to allow his eyes to be bound, he knelt before the block. Catherine watched the execution from a window.[1]

In addition to this execution by which she hoped to strike terror into the hearts of rebels, Catherine made extensive and continued efforts to have an army ready in case her son needed one when he arrived in the kingdom. On the other hand she wrote long letters to Marshal Damville begging him to stop his warlike preparations—a thing he firmly declined to do until his brother was set free from the

[1] La Mothe, V, 339; B. N. fds. fr. 3256; Letts. IV, 301; B. N. It. 1728 f. 338; d'Aubigné, IV, 264. He was present.

Bastille. She also wrote in every direction where she thought it might be useful offering free pardon and a safe life to all Huguenots who would lay down their arms and remain loyal subjects of the King. The difficulty about these offers of pardon was, that since St. Bartholomew, it was difficult for any Huguenot to trust Catherine's word. How little confidence the great family of Montmorency had in her promises is shown by the fact that, at the very time Catherine was writing these flattering letters to Damville to arrange for him an interview with the King on the neutral territory of his friend, the Duke of Savoy, his older brother sent a message from his prison to his wife asking her to send him some of that antidote against poison which he had begged the Tuscan Ambassador to obtain from his master.[1]

There was one passage in the letters which Catherine sent in various directions to announce her assumption of the regency, which must have seemed to any who knew the facts grimly humorous. She said she had assumed this charge against her feelings and was acting in it by the advice and counsel of her children, the Duke of Alençon and the King of Navarre. The truth was that Catherine now knew perfectly well that her younger son had got money from the English Ambassador to help him escape to put himself at the head of the rebels. When she left the château of Vincennes, she took the two young men with her in her own coach to the Louvre, which she guarded with a swarm of sentinels. As the rooms of the King of Navarre were on the ground floor she even had the windows barred with iron. She was informed by her Ambassador that this was perfectly well known in England. Nevertheless she persisted in trying to make Elizabeth believe that they were not prisoners but entirely content with the situation. She made her Ambassador assure Elizabeth that, although offers had been made to her son of a large sum of money and the pay for a considerable body of troops, she knew

[1] Letts. V, 4, 45, 61, 67; X, 352; Neg. Tosc. IV, 15.

perfectly well that these things had been done by reckless subordinates and that neither she nor the English Ambassador in France had anything to do with such practices. At the same time Catherine made sure that her own ambassador, even when he received these instructions, should be under no illusions as to her real judgment about the matter, for she wrote him: "To tell you the truth, we're not in a condition to declare war against her and no more has she, I believe, decided to declare war against us, unless she should see such a good opportunity as she thought she had prepared in this plan; but God by his holy grace and goodness has prevented it." [1]

Elizabeth's willingness to help Alençon to escape and rebel was strengthened by her intense dislike for the new King, Henry III. This dislike for Henry had its origin in the fact that three years before, he had said he would never marry any woman with as bad a reputation as Elizabeth's. Henry talked quite openly about this, and we know from Catherine's letters that she was perfectly aware of it, but she now wrote ordering her Ambassador to assure Elizabeth that this whole report was a lie, because there was no "princess in Christendom whom her son had more respected and honored." So far as her younger son and son-in-law were concerned, she arranged a little scene for the benefit of the English Ambassador. In the midst of her assurances that she did not believe that England had been involved in any plot for the escape of her younger son, he and the King of Navarre came into the room. Alençon said to the Ambassador that it would never enter into his mind to make trouble in his country and that if foreigners should try to do so, he would always be glad to spend his life and his fortune in the service of the King, his brother. The King of Navarre capped this speech with the dramatic phrase, "There have never been any traitors in our family; so don't send anybody else to try to suborn me." This little comedy

[1] Cal. F. 1574, pp. 509, 513; A. N. K. 1535 f. 87; B. N. It. 1728 f. 220; Cheverny, 60; La Mothe, VI, 148; Letts. V, 7, 8, 17, 53.

lost its effect on Elizabeth, because her Ambassador, when he described it to her, added, "The Princes came in with a set tale that they would never serve any but the King and the Queen Mother, but in the meantime, whilst they told their tale, Alençon held me fast by the hand and the King of Navarre jogged me in the elbow to give me to understand that their meaning was not as they said." Catherine evidently did not see this little byplay and was enough fooled by her own comedy to write to the new King, Henry, that his brother and brother-in-law were content with the assurances of affection which they had received from him and saw now the evil and wickedness into which they had almost fallen.[1]

In all the preparations which Catherine had been making to hand an army over to her son when he reached France, she was terribly hampered by the lack of money. The burial of the King cost a great sum. All the strange and elaborate ceremonies which were customary were carried out. For forty days before his funeral, his effigy, clothed in the royal robes, lay on a magnificent bed and was served to dinner and supper with the greatest ceremony. The Venetian Ambassador estimated that it took 150,000 crowns to get him into his tomb. Catherine sent the new King a huge sum to pay the expenses of his journey home; which left her without money to satisfy the insistent demands of the troops for their pay. She tried to borrow 200,000 crowns from Venice at 10% and 500,000 crowns from the Duke of Florence at the same interest, but, in spite of her utmost efforts, she could give her favorite son when he arrived in France nothing but an empty treasury and absolutely exhausted credit. As the President of the Council told her a few days before the King's arrival, "Ten thousand livres are harder to find now than a hundred thousand three years ago." The banker merchants of Lyons, frightened by the failure of three of the chief houses of the city, refused to loan 300,000 francs to the Crown

[1] A. N. K. passim.; Letts. V, 26, 30, 67; Cal. F. 1574, p. 519.

even at 15%. It was only by the lucky chance of being able to get a personal loan of 5,000 francs that the Queen was able to feed her ladies-in-waiting, and, immediately after the arrival of the King, he was obliged to suspend the regular table spread for the pages, so that the poor lads had, for the most part, to pawn everything they could spare, even to their splendid mantles, in order to get food.[1]

Perhaps the most disastrous consequence of this great poverty of the royal treasury was the complete breakdown of the discipline of the army. We have already seen, by the testimony of de la Noue, how rapidly the troops on both sides during the first three civil wars had acquired habits of plunder. The royal troops had now become a terror to the countryside, so that "the very soldiers put throughout the country to protect the people become an intolerable burden to them." How great the lack of discipline and police was, may be seen in the following incident which occurred about the time of the death of Charles IX. A certain man who had been a soldier and turned captain of bandits, got a friend of his in the city of Provins to forge royal commissions for the two of them; the one as captain and the other as lieutenant of infantry. Armed with these he presented himself to the judges of various small towns in the neighborhood, and got permission from them to sound the drum and levy five hundred soldiers for the service of the King. He soon succeeded in raising six hundred, including all the scoundrels of the countryside. They began to hold to ransom and to plunder all travelers on the road and the inhabitants of the villages where they lodged. They never spent more than one night in a place and always demanded a requisition of money from all the villagers, collecting money even from the gentlemen, except those who were strong enough to sound the tocsin and defend their châteaux. They finally arrived before a large fortified village and demanded entrance. The inhabitants refused and a

[1] B. N. It. 1728 f. 353, 411, 430; Arch. Vat., 13 Oct., 1574; Letts. V, 40, 95; Puchesse (3), 326.

fight ensued in which seven or eight of the supposed soldiers were killed. They then stormed the walls, massacred about twenty of the inhabitants and took complete possession of the place. They plundered all the houses, violated women, tortured inhabitants to make them give up buried treasure and even killed some children. But hearing of an order of the Queen that all troops should at once repair to their camps and that, if any disobeyed, the tocsin should be rung and the people assembled to fall upon them, the band divided their plunder and separated. The military authority of the neighboring city of Troyes heard of the affair and took several of the inhabitants up to Paris to lay their complaints before Catherine. They recognized in the streets of Paris the lieutenant of the band, and a dozen of his followers, who were swaggering around, clad in velvet, with their purses full of money. They were arrested, carried back to Troyes and promptly hung and the bodies of two of them sent to each of the towns they had plundered to be chained to posts in front of the gates as a warning to all evil doers.[1]

But even such severe justice did not stop the trouble. Not only bandits and straggling soldiers robbed, but regular companies began to plunder right and left, and if the French infantry were bad, the Italian, Swiss and German auxiliaries in the royal army were even worse. "They agreed in nothing save in spoiling the country";[2] so that the peasants and gentlemen feared them fully as much as they did the Huguenots.

Catherine dispatched two messengers by different routes to carry the news of the death of Charles IX to the King of Poland. They arrived in Cracow within a few hours of each other two weeks later. That very night, in spite of the remonstrances of some of the wiser of the French gentlemen in his suite, Henry decided to leave Poland at once.

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 3255; Nouvs. Acqs. 7735 f. 86; Haton, II, 770.
[2] Cal. F. 1574, p. 566.

As the resolution of the senate made it evident that he would not be allowed to go, he sent his jewels out of the country secretly by one of his gentlemen and four days after he received the message, he got up at midnight, stole out of a back door of the palace and rode over a hundred miles without stopping except to change horses. This dash carried him over the Polish boundary and he made his way to Vienna and thence to Venice. He made this detour in order to avoid Germany where the Protestant princes were showing hostility and the Prince of Condé and the younger brothers of the captive Marshal Montmorency were levying mercenaries with the idea of invading France. Although he had left his capital with such terrible haste and fled over a hundred miles scarcely drawing rein, he dawdled so much over the rest of his journey that it was more than two months after leaving Cracow before he reached Turin, the capital of Savoy, a state whose borders joined those of France.

During this time Catherine was not only very anxious for his arrival, but also very much worried over what might happen when he did arrive. After he got to Italy she announced to the council her intention of going to meet him at Lyons. They objected very strongly, pointing out the danger of her capture by the Huguenots, the danger of leaving two such prisoners as the Marshals in the Bastille during her absence and the need of raising a large sum of money for the expenses of the journey. Three weeks later the Queen decided she would go in spite of the opposition of her council. She said she was too impatient to see her son to wait until he got to Paris, but the talk of the court was that she wanted to reach him because she was afraid of losing her influence over him and her authority in the government; for word had come already that the King was making grave decisions without waiting to consult her. One morning in the middle of August Catherine, as soon as she was dressed, ordered her coaches and getting into one with the Duke of Alençon, the King of Navarre and the Cardinal

of Bourbon, started for Lyons, ordering her court and guards to follow her.[1]

The general opinion of those on the inside that her motive for this journey was fear of losing influence over the new King, is supported by her correspondence. When the King reached Italy Catherine sent to meet him Cheverny, who had been his secretary before he left France and had made all the financial arrangements for his home journey. She wrote out for Cheverny very elaborate instructions in regard to what he was to tell the King. This document contained those same ideas for the management of the government which she had before expressed in her letter to her son, Charles IX, but sharpened and brought to a practical point by her own experience in government. They are expressed evidently in great haste and with that disorder in expression which Catherine seemed unable to avoid whenever she felt deeply and held the pen herself. He was ordered to say to the King that, since God has been pleased to call him to govern this realm, she begs him, by the love he knows she has borne him since his birth and because her strongest desire since the death of the King his father has been to see him great (although not by the death of his brother) to guard his greatness . . . and to enter his kingdom with the gravity which God has given him by nature, mingled with that gentleness and graciousness which he has from himself—to show himself master and no longer a good fellow and comrade. He ought to break the bad custom of giving patronage to those who showed discontent and braved the King. He ought to distribute it and not give too many offices to one person. He ought to reform the conduct of the business of state and she suggests detailed instructions for the arrangement of his day. He ought to keep the key of the state coffers in his own hand and have all dispatches opened in his presence every morning and never at any other time. He ought to understand his finances "from the bottom up," see the treasurer every

[1] B. N. It. 1728 f. 360; A. N. K. 1536 f. 18, Cheverny.

morning and have summary statements of his expenses and his balance rendered to him every week, as the King his grandfather did. He ought to abolish the council of finance, which she had introduced only for her own defense because the King was a minor. He ought to reform the privy council and cut it down to a small number, and reform the discipline of the army and remove all oppression of the people, which will make him extraordinarily loved. She then goes on:

"It may be said, because she knows how to say and write all this, why has she not had it done herself before? The answer is if I had been in the position in which he is now, I would have done it and the proof is, that since I have been in a position of authority everybody knows how things go, thank God. . . . Show him this letter."[1]

The shrewd suggestions of this letter do not, with the exception of the self-justification in the last phrases, necessarily suggest any desire to control. That appears in Catherine's anxiety to have her own candidate appointed first gentleman of the bedchamber. She wrote again to Cheverny bidding him urge upon the King not to take that position away from de Retz, who had held it under the late King. De Retz was one of her creatures, a Florentine who had followed her to France years before, whom she had raised very high in the service of the state and recently created a marshal. The Huguenots detested him, because they rightly suspected that he had been one of the chief counsellors of St. Bartholomew. He was hated by all France because he was an Italian, who had risen from poverty to wealth by royal favor. When the King refused to continue him in his office, Catherine would not be denied, but sent back and forth several times to urge him to make the appointment. There is no reason to doubt the justice of the opinion of the Venetian Ambassador "that this strong desire of the Queen Mother was not so much on de Retz's

[1] B. N. It. 1728 f. 378, 382; A. N. K. 1536 f. 26.

account, as to assure herself more firmly in government; because it is the duty of the first gentleman of the chamber to stay always in the room of the King and to be always near him and so she was sure to know not only what her son did, but, as it were, what her son thought. It was her custom, as I am informed, during the life of the last King, to have reported to her every morning everything the King had said and all that had been said to him, in order to take measures against anything that was being arranged against her power in the government." Henry appointed Villecler, one of the gentlemen who had followed him to Poland, but he finally agreed, vanquished by his mother's importunities, that de Retz and Villecler should serve alternately six months at a time, an arrangement not uncommon for officers of the royal household because of the expense of court life. It was noticed, however, that de Retz was not allowed to spend the night in the King's room.[1]

Catherine had arranged that as soon as the King crossed the boundary of France a salvo of artillery should be fired by the nearest city and that the salute should be taken up and passed along until it reached the northern boundary of France. She herself could not wait for him within the walls of Lyons, but went out to receive him. When they met the tears which were so characteristic of Catherine and her children, either in joy or sorrow, flowed, according to the Spanish Ambassador, for about an hour. After that she shut herself up for two hours entirely alone with her son. The next morning at Lyons as soon as he was dressed she went again into his room, called Cheverny and had a long conference with him alone, and he continued these secret conferences with his mother for a long time after his return.[2]

The King who arrived in his kingdom to find an empty treasury, an undisciplined army and a brother and brother-in-law apparently anxious to head the revolt which was

[1] Letts. V, 76; B. N. It. 1728 f. 391, 397; Letts. V, 76; A. N. K. 1536 f. 45; Cal. F. 1574, p. 546.
[2] B. N. It. 1728 f. 397; Arch. Vat. 20 Sept., 1574.

active or nascent in several parts of the kingdom, did not seem to observers to be well fitted to take the advice of his mother to "make himself the master." When the Poles elected him their king, the reputation as a soldier which he had gained from being in nominal command at Moncontour and Jarnac had greatly helped his candidacy. When they saw him, they were very much disappointed. Neither his dress nor his habits suggested the soldier. He did not share his brother's passionate love of hunting and his earlier fame as a warrior had been replaced by the reputation of a rather soft personage in delicate health, who loved peace and quiet. He dabbled a little in literature and art, though the nature of his patronage is shown by the fact that when he passed through Venice he ordered three pictures from Tintoretto for fifty écus and spent for perfumery at the Sign of the Lily eleven hundred and twenty-five écus. He was very fond of the society of ladies and court festivities. In the midst of the tremendous problems which he found waiting to be resolved at Lyons, the Spanish Ambassador records with disgust: "The King goes every night to balls and does nothing but dance. During four whole days he was dressed in mulberry satin with stockings, doublet and cloak of the same color. The cloak was very much slashed in the body and had all its folds set with buttons and adorned with ribbons, white and scarlet and mulberry, and he wore bracelets of coral on his arm." Some of his actions would suggest to any modern physician an unhealthy condition of the nervous system, for the vigor which was apparently lacking to his body appeared from time to time in morbidly acute displays of feeling. He now gave signs of that exaggerated religious excitement which during his life alternated with debauchery. There was a custom about a hundred years old, for bands of penitents, disguised and with their faces covered, to wander through the streets chanting the psalms of David and beating each other with scourges in atonement for their sins. This custom, though denounced by some theologians and forbidden

by some popes as pagan rather than Christian, finally came to be tolerated. Finding one of these fraternities active in Avignon, Henry joined with great zeal in the processions and many of his courtiers imitated his example.[1]

The combination of mulberry satin and coral bracelets with the domino of a penitent, did not strengthen the impression which the King's personality made upon his subjects. The Nuncio wrote soon after he arrived in France: "What France needs is a strong king. This boy is in mind inclined to ease and in body weak and ill, so that I don't believe he can live many months. He is twenty-four years old and is always sticking in the house and for the greater part of the time in bed." [2]

Before he left France for Poland, Henry had shown as lieutenant-general of the kingdom and keeper of the royal seal, a good deal of diligence, and now he took his mother's advice and made a drastic reform in the order of the court. Formerly the King's room had been filled with a whole crowd of courtiers before he was up and his ears filled with complaints and requests while he was taking his dinner. Henry III would not allow anybody to come into his room in the morning before he was dressed and he put a railing around the table so that nobody could talk to him while he was eating. These regulations greatly offended the French nobles, who were accustomed at all times to have perfectly free access to their King and a great many gentlemen left the court. But the elaborate new rules for the reform of the court and the conduct of business were not continuously or entirely carried out, and although Henry III was a much more hard working king at the business of state than either of his brothers, the determination to know what his ministers were doing was often laid aside for his pleasures or his religious observances.[3]

One thing that Henry had determined to do before he crossed the boundaries of his kingdom, was even more dis-

[1] Nolhac, III, 192; A. N. K. 1536 f. 49; de Thou, V, 123.
[2] Arch. Vat. 20 Sept. 1574.
[3] B. N. It. 1728 f. 397; Nouillac, 50.

pleasing to the French nobles than his rather ineffective reform of the court and state business. During his stay in Turin, he promised to restore to the Duke the fortresses of Savigliano and Pinerolo, leaving the little Marquisate of Saluces as the only remnant of the once extensive French conquests south of the Alps. Why Henry did this would be difficult to say. There were of course solid reasons for abandoning all conquests outside of the natural and racial boundaries of France, but they could not have appealed to the man who was still trying to retain the crown of Poland although he had inherited the crown of France. It seems probable that he was moved largely by that extraordinary desire to give things away which was one of his morbid passions. During his inauguration as King of Poland, he was presented, according to custom, with several basins full of gold pieces. He had to rest his hand on one of these while he was listening to the long harangues of the ambassadors and he was seized with such an uncontrollable desire to give the money to his servitors that he broke out into a profuse perspiration and had to interrupt the ceremonies in order to go away to change his shirt. It was probably the same sort of an impulse which led him to please his aunt and uncle, who had entertained him so graciously, by giving them these three important military positions. The Duke of Nevers, who was the governor of the French possessions south of the Alps, resigned rather than surrender them and the whole royal council and everybody at court was opposed to it, but the King stood firm. Catherine, seeing that he was resolute to do it, did not oppose him, but wrote an affectionate letter with her own hand to the Duke to emphasize as much as possible this proof of good will on the part of her son towards him and to ask for his continued alliance and friendship.[1]

[1] Letts. V, 98 n. Editor of Nevers, Pref. 8 from eyewitness, B. N. It. 172 f. 420.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE KING'S BROTHER HEADS REVOLT

The most difficult thing the King had to decide was whether he should yield to the Huguenots or fight them. Catherine had made preliminary arrangements which might help to carry out either decision and it seems as if she herself was not quite clear in her mind which would be the better thing to do. The choice was not an easy one. As the Spanish Ambassador wrote: "The King cannot make peace because the rebel demands are so great, and he cannot make war because he has not a cent of money." The grand council was divided on the question and apparently the majority was for peace. But the King decided to pursue the war. The immediate result of this decision was that Damville appeared openly in arms, as head of the allied parties of Huguenots and United Catholics, or Malcontents, of several provinces. He was too strong to be attacked in force and the royal armies carried on a rather inconclusive campaign by besieging various small cities, until the end of January, when the King left the neighborhood of Lyons to go to Rheims to be crowned.[1]

A few days before, a death had occurred in the court circle which seems to have made a very deep impression upon Catherine's spirits. The Cardinal of Lorraine had walked in the procession of the penitents with the King and took a severe cold, which developed into an illness of which he died on Christmas Day, 1574. Two days after his death the Venetian Ambassador made a comment upon it which is quite complete. "This realm has lost a great man and the Catholic Church a great defender, although

[1] Report of Eng. Amb. prejudiced, A. N. K. 1534 f. 35.

some, perhaps more out of ill will than truth, say he undertook her defense more for the advantage of his personal interests than from devotion. It appears that those who rejoice at his death are many more than those who grieve and especially the Queen Mother, who from what I hear, hated him a good deal." Among those who rejoiced that he was gone, were all the Huguenots and a story grew up which represented him on his death-bed filled with remorse and trembling with terror of damnation. There is no reason whatever to believe it, although he was delirious a long time before he died. It was a common custom of the time for controversialists of both sides to represent the death-bed of any noted heretic or any noted persecutor of heresy as haunted by the fear of hell.[1]

Catherine had intensely disliked the Cardinal; although she had suppressed her feelings enough to work intimately with him from time to time. But he and Cardinal Bourbon were about the last of the old set with whom she had begun the career of splendor when her husband came to the throne. Guise, the Constable, St. André, Anthony of Navarre, Condé, the Admiral, all had died by sword or bullet. The desperate illness of her old rival occupied her thoughts. The sensitive nervous organization which shifted Catherine so rapidly from laughter to tears, was apt, when her thoughts were full of any subject that weighed upon her, to produce visualizations. When these agreed with happenings, they seemed to her and to those near her, prophetic. Her daughter Margaret firmly believed in this power of second sight of her mother and gives in her memoirs several instances of it: in every case instances where Catherine was much worried over some subject. Catherine herself also believed firmly in the prophetic character of these visions. On Christmas Day about the time the Cardinal died, Catherine had a visualization of him. Three accounts of the occurrence have come to us; one recorded within a few

[1] Cal. F. 1574, p. 586; Arch. Vat. 29 Dec.; B. N. It. 1728 f. 505. See Ergänzüngen zur Janssen's Geschickte.

days of it, the others written afterwards by those who named the eye-witnesses from whom they got the story. They differ somewhat in detail, as is natural for such a story thus transmitted, but they all agree that the figure she saw seemed to Catherine a threatening one, and that she cried out in terror. The result was to throw her into an illness which lasted for some time.[1]

The death of the Cardinal enabled Catherine to bear with more complaisance that she would otherwise have shown, a marriage which the King suddenly arranged for himself. On his way to Poland, he had seen in his sister's court at Nancy, Louise de Vaudemont, the young daughter of a powerful French noble, descended in the younger line from the house of Lorraine. In spite of the fact that he was at the time giving every sign of being desperately in love with the Princess of Condé (whom the girl somewhat resembled), Henry was very much taken with her and now, simply notifying his mother what he was about to do, he sent one of the gentlemen of his bed-chamber to ask for her hand. Marriages were always Catherine's special interest and it must have been a terrible chagrin to her when one of her sons suddenly arranged his own to suit himself, without consulting her. If the Cardinal had still been living, she would have had in addition the fear of strengthening too much the house of her enemies by giving them another queen among their numbers. But their best brain was gone and she mistakenly felt that they would not, in future, be very dangerous to her or to the state. So she made the best of what she could not help and even wrote enthusiastically to the Duke of Savoy and the King of Spain about the charms and virtues of the bride. Indeed it was hard not to like a girl so gentle and good as the young queen proved herself to be.[2]

The magnificent ceremonies of the coronation and

[1] Letts. V, 109; Margaret, B. N. It. 1728 f. 517; d'Aubigné, IV, 300, from eyewitnesses; de Thou, V, 124.

[2] Letts. V, 112, 113; A. N. K. 1537 f. 10; Arch. Vat., 11 Feb., 1575.

marriage were followed for Catherine by one of those personal griefs with which her life was filled. Her daughter, the Duchess of Lorraine, who had brought up the new bride, died almost in the midst of the festivities. Everybody noticed how very much Catherine was affected by grief. For some time it was impossible for her to restrain her tears whenever her daughter was mentioned, and she was obliged to withdraw from public business until she could recover her self-control. She wrote to the King of Spain acknowledging a letter of sympathy: "I cannot but think that God desires me not to be destroyed by the honor and grandeur of this world, which, if I had enjoyed them without affliction and evil and sorrow, perhaps would have made me forget to acknowledge Him as I ought; therefore I like to think that He loves me as much as He has sent affliction upon me." [1]

The court of France was not at that time a place favorable to sentiments of resignation and piety. Perhaps never during the whole time of Catherine's life in it, had it been a place where dangerous passions were seething so violently with so little restraint of wisdom or serious purpose. Its society was dominated by four young men, Henry the King, Henry of Navarre, Henry of Guise and the King's younger brother, the Duke of Alençon, of whom the oldest was twenty-four. We have a description of the situation from two people who played a large part in it, the King of Navarre and his young wife, Margaret, the King's sister, and it is amply confirmed by the observations of others in the court who did not know so much of the details as these two.

The time was long past when the Duke of Montpensier could, without provoking laughter, give to the little Margaret a medal representing a nest of three small birds being fed by their mother. A cupid carried the nest in one hand and in the other a bow. The device was "equal love." [2]

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 6; Cal. F. 1575, p. 20; Arch. Vat., 11 March; Letts. V, 121.

[2] Hilarion de Coste. Eloges des Dames Illustres.

The birds had left the nest now and hatred was their comrade. Margaret writes that the King on his return to France, inspired by the evil counsel of one of his gentlemen, an old enemy of hers named du Guast, conceived an extreme jealousy "of my brother Alençon, suspecting very much the friendship between him and my husband, thinking that I was the only means which kept up their friendship and that the most fit expedient to separate them was on the one hand to get me into a quarrel and put me into bad relations with my husband and on the other to bring it to pass that Madame de Sauve, with whom both were in love, should encourage both in such a way that they would fall into extreme jealousy of each other. That abominable design, the source of so many evils my brother and I have since suffered, was pursued with the greatest animosity and cunning."

One day, while the court still remained at Lyons, Margaret and a party of ladies determined to go and visit the Abbey of St. Peter. While they visited the convent, they left the Queen of Navarre's coach, which was gilded and had a cover of yellow velvet embroidered with silver, standing in the street. The King, accompanied by Margaret's husband and several other gentlemen of the court, was walking down that street in order to visit one of his friends who was ill. An intimate of du Guast, who was in the party, pointed out to the King that his sister's coach was standing in front of the lodgings of a certain courtier by the name of Bidé. The King at once sent him into the lodging of Bidé. He came back and reported: "The birds have been there, but they aren't there any longer," whereupon the King, filled with rage, went home and told his mother that his sister was misconducting herself. When Margaret came back from her visit to the Abbey, all unconscious of what had happened, the first person she saw in the palace was her husband, "who began to laugh as soon as he saw me and said, 'Go see the Queen your mother and I'm certain that you'll come away very angry!' " He wouldn't tell her what

it was about and seeing that she could not get anything out of him, she went to find the Queen her mother. On her way she met the Duke of Guise, who told her what he had heard from one of the gentlemen who was walking with the King.

"I went into the room of the Queen my mother, but she wasn't there. . . . I went into her cabinet which had wooden paneling so that one could easily hear in the next room everything that happened. As soon as she sees me, she commences to spout out fire and to say everything that a most unmeasured anger could utter. I told her the truth, but she had no ear for the truth nor for reason. She wouldn't listen to me. Whether it was because her mind was filled with the falsehood or perhaps to please that son, whom out of affection and a sense of duty and hope and fear she fairly worshipped as an idol, I do not know, but she would not stop moving around the room crying out and threatening me. And all of it was heard by the next room full of people.

"The next morning an Italian banker who was a servitor of my brother begged my brother, the King my husband and me and several other princesses and ladies of the court, to go to dinner in a beautiful garden which he had in the city. I always observed such respect for the authority of the Queen my mother, so long as I was near her, either as a young girl or as a married woman, that I never went anywhere without asking permission, so I went to find her as she came back from mass, to ask her permission to go to this festival. After giving me a public refusal, she added that I could go anywhere I chose because she didn't care what I did."

While they were at the garden feast the King talked to a woman and found out his mistake, and when they came back

"the Queen my mother sent for me to come into her inner cabinet which was close to that of the King and told me that she had found out the truth and that all I had told her was true; that there was nothing at all in that story which the valet de chambre who had brought her this report had given her; that he was a bad man and that she'd dismiss him. Seeing from my look that I didn't pay any attention to that attempt to cover the

matter up, she did everything she could to destroy my opinion that it was the King who had done me that kindness."

Du Guast having failed in this plot to make her husband quarrel with her and so with Alençon, who would be sure to take up his sister's cause, tried another way; that was working through Madame de Sauve, who, following his instructions,

"in a short time made the love of my brother and of the King my husband, before rather lukewarm and gentle like that of people so young, so extremely passionate that they hadn't anything else in mind except following that woman. In consequence they arrived at so great and strong a jealousy of each other that, although she was also pursued by the Duke of Guise, by du Guast, de Souvray and several others, who were all more liked by her than they were, she didn't pay any attention to them and these two brothers-in-law were not afraid of any rival except each of the other. And that woman, in order to play her game better, persuaded the King my husband that I was jealous and that for this reason I was of the party of my brother. We easily believe what is told us by people whom we love; so he put faith in what she told him and separated himself from me, which he had never done before, because, whatever he'd had in mind, he had always talked to me as freely as if I had been his sister, knowing perfectly well that I wasn't in the least jealous."

Margaret then tried to break up this game with both men. She continues:

"My brother Alençon, who in everything believed nobody as much as me, couldn't regain his self-control even though his safety and mine were at stake. So strong were the charms of that Circe aided by the devilish spirit of du Guast that, instead of profiting by my warning words, he went and told them all to that woman. How is it possible to hide anything from the person one loves? She became exceedingly angry at me and with the more zeal gave herself up to serving the design of du Guast and in order to avenge herself she made my husband every day more ready to hate me, so that he scarcely ever spoke to me."

In consequence of this situation, her brother Alençon drew closer to her than ever and introduced to her one of his gentlemen, de Bussy. Du Guast then tried his hand once more and sent the King to Catherine to complain of Margaret. But Catherine said:

" 'It's trouble-makers who put such ideas into your head. My daughter is unfortunate to be born in such an age. In my own time we talked freely to everybody and all the honest gentlemen who followed the King your father, were ordinarily in the chamber of Madame Marguerite, your aunt, and in mine. Nobody thought it was strange, as there was no reason to think it strange. Bussy sees my daughter before you, before her husband, before all the gentlemen of her husband in her chamber and before everybody; it is not secretly nor behind closed doors. What is there to think about it? Do you know anything else?' The King, being astonished, replied to her: 'Madame, I only say what other people are saying.' She answered: 'Who are these others, my son? They are people who want to get you into a quarrel with all your family.' The King having gone, my mother told me the whole business and said: 'You have been born in a miserable age,' and then calling Madame de Dampierre she began to talk with her of the honest liberty and the pleasure which they had in those past days, without being subject as we are to slander."

Du Guast then tried to assassinate Bussy at night. Bussy and his friends defended themselves and an Italian gentleman of the suite of Alençon

"ran all bleeding into the room of the Louvre where he slept, calling out that they were killing Bussy. By good luck I hadn't gone to bed, and, as my room was close to my brother's, I heard the frightened man crying out on the staircase that terrible news. I immediately ran into my brother's chamber to keep him from going out and sent to beg the Queen my mother to come there in order to keep him indoors. We kept him back with the greatest difficulty, the Queen his mother pointing out that there was no sense in going out alone in the night; that the darkness would cover every sort of wickedness and that du Guast was a bad enough sort of man to have gotten up this affair expressly in order to make him rush out and fall into some accident. In

the state of despair in which he was, these words would have had little force, but using her authority she stopped him, gave orders at the gate that they shouldn't allow him to go out, and took the trouble of remaining with him until he found out that Bussy had escaped." [1]

The situation was so bad that even outsiders knew that the King hated his brother with a deadly hatred. "Not one of them," says a letter from the French court, "is content or in quiet with another, nor mother with son, nor brother with brother, nor mother with daughter. It is a very hell among them. . . . One day they will cut the throats one of the other." This was no exaggeration of the prevalent feeling, for Henry of Navarre wrote at this time to one of his friends:

"The court is the strangest place you ever saw. We are nearly always ready to cut each other's throats. We carry daggers, mail coats and often cuirasses under our clothes. Severac will tell you the reason. The King is just as much threatened as I am. He loves me more than ever. Monsieur de Guise and Monsieur du Maine never leave me. Your brother and Sainte Colombe are the chiefs of my council. You never saw how strong I am in friends in this court. I brave all the world. All the cliques which you know about hate me to the death for the love of Alençon and have the third time forbidden my mistress to speak to me and watch her so closely that she wouldn't dare to look at me. I am only waiting the hour to give them battle, because they say they will kill me and I want to get ahead of them." [2]

All sides, in these deadly and complicated hatreds where the dagger was so ready to the hand, turned to Catherine as the only person at court who was in any sense impartial. The mother of the Duke of Guise and his wife were continually coming to her with complaints; on one occasion the

[1] Margaret, 45; confirmed Cal. F. 1575, p. 30; B. N. It. 1729 f. 3, 110; Du Guast was soon assassinated.

[2] Rel. I, 4, p. 368; Cal. F. 1575, p. 33, 70; Letts. Missives, I, 81; B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 7734 f. 1.

Duchess of Guise fell on her knees before her and said that there was a plot to murder her son as well as the King. Catherine seems to have been the only one of the family who saw the terrible danger that lay behind these quarrels—the danger of providing a leader for the, as yet ununified, revolt: which might duplicate all over the kingdom that body of the "Associated Catholics" or "Malcontents" who in Languedoc had, under the lead of Damville, allied themselves with the Huguenots. She did everything she could to lessen the ill feeling between her sons and when she could not do that, she protected the younger against the King. In this effort she was continually blocked by the Duke of Guise. Having completely won over to his side the King of Navarre, Guise was secretly doing everything he could to embitter the quarrel between the royal brothers. She had never stood in so difficult a position during her long and stormy life. Two of her chosen counsellors and strongest supporters who had risen by her favor, the Chancellor Birague and the Marshal de Retz, were the chosen targets of hatred, not only for the Huguenots, but for large numbers of Catholics. Every Huguenot proclamation, as well as the pronunciamento of the Associated Catholics, headed by Damville, put forth as one of the chief grievances of the realm the influence of foreigners in the councils of the state. Everyone knew whom they were aimed at and the attack did not have to be carried very far to strike Catherine herself.[1]

In Paris this bitter hatred of Italians took a very concrete form. A popular preacher in his sermons attacked them and said they ought to be driven from France, as the cause of the heavy taxes under which the poor were groaning. His sermons became the talk of the city, so much that there was fear of a "Sicilian massacre" of the Italians. A few weeks later two valuable crosses were stolen from Sainte Chapelle. Popular rumor at once accused the

[1] Cal. F. 1575, p. 44; B. N. It. 1729 f. 33; Arch. Vat. 4 Apr., 11 Mar. 1575; B. N. It. 1729 f. 13, 315.

Italians of having done it, though the favorite story finally laid it at the door of the Queen Mother herself. This tense state of feeling soon produced bloodshed. An Italian soldier coming out of the theatre, got into a quarrel with a French student and stabbed him. The students immediately armed and proceeded to sack and burn the Italian quarter of the city. They were stopped by troops, but the next day, a regular conspiracy was formed to kill all the Italians in Paris and sack the houses of the most wealthy, by an organized band of fifteen hundred men. The conspiracy was revealed to the police, the leaders were arrested and the riot stopped. But for two weeks afterwards Italians were killed by mobs in the streets "almost every day." As the judges of the ordinary courts before which the leaders of this conspiracy would have come, were reluctant to condemn them to death, the King had one of them tried by his privy council and hung and quartered.[1]

As the months passed the task of keeping the peace between her sons grew more and more difficult for Catherine. Before one of her intimates she wept bitterly because she could no longer prevent the King from putting his brother in prison and she knew it would be her ruin, for Alençon would never believe she was not the cause of his imprisonment. This troubled her the more because Nostradamus, the celebrated soothsayer, had predicted that she would see each one of her sons King. On several occasions during the summer the rumor spread that Alençon had fled from court. Once at a ball Catherine went out herself, found Alençon and made him come in and dance in order to stop the report. Things came to a climax about the middle of September, when it was discovered, just at bedtime, that Alençon was not in the palace. Catherine went to her daughter Margaret and accused her of helping her brother to escape. Margaret answered sharply that he was still in Paris and that he

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 11, 95, 137, 148, 159; Cal. F. 1575, pp. 78, 80; Neg. Tosc. IV, 38; Journal, 173.

would be back before morning. In the midst of the trouble he came in and his mother commenced to scold him like a small boy. "You go out at uncertain hours; you ought to be whipped." Margaret immediately spoke up in defense of her favorite brother. "Pardon me, Madam, but there are others who deserve to be whipped and not my brother. If you keep up these suspicions you will force him to run away." [1]

The King had several times determined to shut his brother up in prison and Catherine had prevented him. He now again determined to do so, but once more broke down before his mother's resistance. That very night, a little before the King's supper, Alençon, putting on a large mantle in which he buried himself up to the nose, went out, followed by only one servant who was not known and walked to a gate of the city, where he found a carriage waiting for him. He rode in it about half a mile outside the walls where horses were ready and several leagues farther on he found two or three hundred horsemen waiting to escort him to safety. The news almost broke down Catherine's self-control. The Tuscan Ambassador, who had seen her after the deaths of her son and her daughter and her sister-in-law, wrote he had never seen her so afflicted for anything that had happened since he had been in France. She was not able to maintain her usual royal dignity, tears sprang into her eyes, her face was distorted with grief and she spoke hesitatingly, as if she was afraid of breaking out into sobs. The terribly grave situation put her in a most dangerous position. She knew that if the brothers fought, it would be the ruin of France and probably the destruction of their house, and she knew everybody would blame her. The Duke of Guise and his friends who were now so strong with the King, would urge him to fight and if they separated him from her influence she saw no outcome but total disaster. That the only safe course for France and the

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 137, 153; Arch. Vat. 13 Sept.

house of Valois happened also to be the only course to save her own authority ought not to blind us, as it did many contemporary observers, to the wisdom and skill with which she acted in a desperate situation.[1]

Her first wild thought was to kidnap her younger son and bring him back by force. She wrote to the Duke of Nevers that she was grieved to see by his letter that many people were rallying to the standard of "that poor unhappy boy" and suggested that perhaps he could find five or six sure men who might go to him and offer to raise forces on his behalf—mounted men. Let them have orders to make themselves very much trusted . . . and take a chance of carrying him off. "I set this plot in general terms; you work it up and talk about it to Matignon." She begs him not to let anybody know that this suggestion comes from her. Her son's caution and the increase of his forces soon showed her that this plan of her first desperation was impossible. Alençon had written to his brother immediately after his flight that he always wanted to dwell with him in brotherly love, but he had never been able to get it. He had to save his life because he had been warned that he was about to be thrown into the Bastille to wait for some settlement of his case "taken from the history of Cæsar Borgia." He took the title of "Governor-General for the King and Defender of the Liberties of the Commonwealth of France." His proclamation said that he had risen in defense of the ancient laws, which had been violated by the influence of a very few persons, almost all foreigners, who, under pretense of a difference of religion, had crushed the people with taxes, filled France with robbery and murder and destroyed the ancient liberty of the clergy and nobility. He demanded peace, justice and the assembly of the Estates General of France, from which all foreigners were to be excluded. Until the Estates General and a holy council of the whole

[1] Cal. F. 1575, pp. 140, 141, 145; Arch. Vat., 11 Mar., 16 Sept.; B. N. It. 1729 f. 238, 291, 357; A. N. K. 1537 f. 57, 107; Margaret, 65; Neg. Tosc. IV, 45.

Church could meet, he demanded toleration for both the old and the new religion everywhere.[1]

The insurgent Huguenots in all parts of the kingdom were already taking steps to acknowledge him as their protector and it was difficult to foresee how many Catholic malcontents would rise to his banner in answer to such a proclamation. In addition Catherine knew that the refugee Prince of Condé was levying a large force of mercenaries among the Protestant German Princes with the help of a secret subsidy from Elizabeth. From the point of view of statecraft, there had been much to be said for fighting previous wars of religion to a finish and perhaps the fundamental error in all Catherine's handling of the terrible situation was, that out of fear of losing her own authority and hatred of the Guise, she had not tried reversing the policy Elizabeth used in England and made France exclusively Catholic, so far as the law went; while at the same time taking administrative measures which would grant enough practical tolerance to Calvinists to keep them from revolt. But whatever might have been said in favor of pushing the Huguenot wars to a finish earlier, it was now too late. Anyone not entirely blinded by personal ambition, party faction or religious fanaticism, must have seen that the road of violence was the road to ruin. For the situation was complicated by the fact that, besides the astrologer Nostradamus, many other people who knew the habits and constitution of the King thought he would die before very long and leave no direct heirs behind him. In this case his insurgent brother, and after him, his brother-in-law Henry of Navarre, would be the heirs to the crown. Many men would not be too active in fighting a man who might soon mount the throne. Peace must be had at any cost.

Catherine got into her coach and accompanied by her daughter, upon whose influence over Alençon she counted, began to chase her reluctant son over central France to

[1] Letts. V, 136, 137, 133 n.; B. N. C. C. C., I, 79; Nouvs. Acqs., 7735 f. 279; Cal. F. 1575, p. 141.

force him to an interview. She was leaving a great danger behind her, for, during her absence, the Guise faction might master the mind of the King and pointing to the result of her refusal to consent to Alençon's arrest, persuade him that maternal tenderness made her a bad counsellor in this case. So great was her fear of this, that, during all the fatigues of her rapid journey, she wrote nearly every day long letters of many pages to the King and the council. Forty-eight of these letters have survived, and those written to her son with her own hand show in the plainest way the terrible anxiety under which she was laboring and the great difficulties of her task. After about two weeks' chase, she finally brought her younger son to an interview. When she stepped out of her coach, he kneeled on the ground before her and she tenderly embraced him "not without tears." By the end of November she succeeded in making a truce with Alençon for six months in order to discuss terms of permanent peace.[1]

She had hardly left Paris on her mission of reconciliation when she had been obliged to defend herself against fire from the rear, as the following letters to the King show:

"Believe me I have as much prudence and judgment as many of those who want to plunge you into battle. . . . Forgive me if I write so freely, for you are everything I have in the world, even though you might come not to love me any more or trust in me as you ought. Forgive me if I talk to you this way. I don't want to live since the death of the King your father except to save you and God and you know it, I am certain."

This letter, written at night, was followed by another in the early morning answering a warning from the King that he had been told that her life was in danger:

"Forgive my not paying any attention to this. It's an old game which the Admiral used before his death, sending every day a warning that somebody was trying to assassinate me. I have loved you more than I have myself and that obliges me to die

[1] Arch. Vat. 11 March, 1575; B. N. It. 1729 f. 272.

to get you out of the misery and calamity in which you are, if I can possibly do it at any peril that I might run, but I beg you assure yourself that God will take care of me as He has always done."

Now, even after she had made this truce, her opponents at court kept trying to get it broken by an immediate return to war and she poured out a flood of indignant letters to Henry. "Those who did it," she wrote about one intrigue, "ought to have their heads cut off." [1]

She felt he needed detailed directions about carrying out the conditions of the truce. The chief of these was that the two marshals, Montmorency and Cossé, who had been in the Bastille for eighteen months, should be set free at once. This was universally considered a lucky escape for them. The Spanish Ambassador reported that Montmorency's servants had been taken away from him because they intended to poison him and it is certain that he feared such a fate. There is a fairly well authenticated report that the King and his mother had decided to have him strangled quietly in his cell, and while we cannot be perfectly sure of either of these stories, we know that everybody at the French court believed that, if Damville were dead, the marshals would not long survive him. Catherine, who knew exactly what her son had felt, done and said about the marshals, was very much afraid of his loose and bitter tongue. So she wrote to him:

"It seems to me that it is not enough to set the marshals free from prison. You must win them over to your side and it's no time to say 'I can't put any constraint on myself nor dissimulate.' . . . I want you to send for Montmorency and say 'I set you free from prison believing in your fidelity and being sure that what you promise you will do. . . . I didn't put you in prison and if I could have set you free earlier without injuring the reputation and the memory of the late King my brother I would have done it, as I have done it now,' etc., etc., . . . and in saying this I beg that he may never . . . find out that you have made sport

[1] Letts. 140, 141, 174.

of the way you've cheated him, neither with men nor with women, for they'll laugh at it with you and afterwards . . . will tell the whole thing to him and . . . they'll hate you double when they hear that behind their backs you have been mocking at them."

Reckless mockery was evidently a habit of the King, for, writing to him the next day to say that she was sending the Duke of Montpensier to persuade Alençon to peace, Catherine added:

"Out of fear lest Alençon in order to gain him might tell him that you were in the habit of laughing at him and his son, I said to him before he went away, 'Don't put your trust in the beautiful words of my son Alençon. In the hopes of gaining you to his side, he will tell you a lot of lies'; for he has a habit of telling lies." [1]

One article of the truce was broken from the start by both sides—the article which provided that the armies should be dismissed at once. Condé had been levying among the Lutheran princes an army of reiters. The young Duke of Guise had met the advance corps of this force early in October at Château-Thierry on the Marne and defeated it after a brief and not very bloody combat.[2] But at the end of the year, in spite of the truce, a mercenary army of 8,000 German horse, 6,000 foot men from the Protestant cantons of Switzerland and 7,000 harquebusiers, crossed the borders under the command of the Prince of Condé and Duke John Casimir, the son of the Elector Palatine. They marched southward plundering as they went. Condé was entirely unable to restrain them and when he tried to protect a small town they killed his guard and burnt the town.

Alençon had arranged with Damville to bring up the forces of three provinces of south central France to join

[1] A. N. K. 1537 f. 69; de Thou ctd., V, 219 n.; B. N. It. 1729 f. 117, 123; Letts. V, 148, 149.

[2] De Thou, V, 221; d'Aubigné, IV, 379; Cal. F. 1575, p. 155.

the army of the reiters and then march on Paris. He had already created an excuse for breaking the truce by an indignant message that an attempt had been made to poison him. Catherine, who was so hurt and angered by the message that she fell into a fever, sent the Duke of Montpensier to investigate and he found everybody who had drunk of the alleged poisoned wine in excellent health; including the valet who brought it, who had been forced to drink a great deal of it.[1] When Alençon found himself, the end of March, at the head of an army of 30,000 men, with the Huguenot and Politique forces of Languedoc and Guienne in reserve, he crossed the Loire and occupied positions in a semi-circle near Paris, cutting off provisions from the city. The King was obliged to give way to all the demands upon him and granted such terms to the Huguenots as, in the days before St. Bartholomew, they would hardly even have dared to ask. On the 6th of May, 1576, the Queen Mother made with Alençon the peace known as the "Peace of Monsieur," whose terms were embodied in public law by the Edict of Beaulieu. The free exercise of the Reformed religion was permitted everywhere. Every Parlement was to have one tribunal composed half of Catholic and half of Reformed judges. The sentences of all those who had been executed because of the previous troubles over religion since the death of Henry II, were revoked, including La Mole, Coconnas, Montgomery, Briquemault, Cavaignes and all others who perished on the scaffold. The King did not, indeed, grant the demand that the authors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew should be punished, for his mother and brother were among them, but all its victims were declared innocent and their families, as a reparation, freed from taxes. In each of the four provinces, Languedoc, Guienne, Dauphiny and Provence, the Huguenots were given two strong cautionary towns. The

[1] De Crue (3), 313; B. N. fds. fr. 3384 f. 76; Alençon to Damville, B. N. It. 1729 f. 422; Arch. Vat. 3 Jan., 1576; Neg. Tosc. IV, 54.

King granted pretty much everything that the Huguenots had asked, except that he would not consent to forbid in France every other religion but the Reformed religion and the Roman Catholic religion.

In addition to those articles of the treaty of peace which were included in the edict, certain private agreements were made with the Huguenot leaders. Alençon received the independent administration of a rich principality on the banks of the Loire which brought him in 300,000 livres a year and contained many strong cities. Duke Casimir of Bavaria got the salaries of commissions as captain of men at arms and colonel of 4,000 reiters, together with other pensions, besides the Duchy of Étampes and nine lordships in Burgundy. It was agreed that the King still owed him about 1,700,000 livres. The Prince of Condé was restored to the governorship of Picardy and given for his security the strong town of Péronne. Damville, the leader of the Politiques who had acted with the Huguenots, needed no great concessions, for he was already almost like an independent ruler in Lanquedoc. There was a fifth Huguenot leader who had to be treated with, although as yet he had taken no active part in the preparation of the party for war. Three months before this settlement, Henry of Navarre had escaped from Paris and made his way across France to his little kingdom in the south. He was granted by a special treaty the restoration of all his rights and permission to govern his kingdom in peace.

Just before he fled a curious incident occurred which was recorded at the time as ominous. The three Henrys, Henry the King, Henry of Navarre and Henry of Guise, were all together in the King's room. Henry of Navarre and Henry of Guise were playing at dice upon a very smooth board and the English Ambassador reports that "after they had done there appeared suddenly upon the board certain great and round drops of blood. It astonished them marvelously finding no cause in the world of the blood, but as

it were a prodigy." Beginning twelve years later, all three of the Henrys died in succession by the assassin's knife and men remembering the mysterious portent thus plainly recorded so long before, saw its explanation in their fates.[1]

[1] De Crue (3), 329; Cal. F. 1576, pp. 245, 326, 333; Letts. V, App. 291.

CHAPTER XXXIV

"THE LEAGUE OF THE HOLY TRINITY" BEGINS

Though everybody about the court aside from the Duke of Guise and his not very numerous adherents, had felt that peace was absolutely necessary, the publication of terms so exceedingly favorable to the Huguenots and the knowledge gradually spread abroad of the enormous sacrifices made in private agreements to secure the support of the leaders, aroused great discontent among orthodox taxpayers. This feeling was strongest in the city of Paris, and Catherine became terribly unpopular among that portion of the population who had praised her for St. Bartholomew. The Venetian Ambassador wrote:

"The blame of everything that happens is put upon the Queen Mother, whence it comes about that, if at first she was little loved because she was a foreigner and an Italian, now, to tell the truth, she is hated because everybody knows and confesses that to keep herself in the government and in supreme authority, not only in the minority of her sons but when they are grown up, she has always fomented the discords and divisions of party, using first one side and then the other according as it suited her private interests and always trying as far as she could to keep her sons, even when they were grown up, far from business and from grave thoughts in order that, being inexpert and weak, they should put everything into her hands as they have done and especially as this King is doing." [1]

This impression that the King was like wax in Catherine's hands, was made stronger than the facts warranted, by the frivolous conduct of Henry. In the midst of the terrible crisis of the state which was partly solved by the

[1] Rel., I, 4, p. 364; Busbecq, II, 57, 75; Arch. Vat., 17 July, 1576. "Every one laughs at the King."

Peace of Monsieur, the King took it upon himself to display a most inopportune devotion to literature. He formed the habit of retiring every day after dinner to a little room without windows, which required candle light even in the daytime, taking with him four or five poets and humanists and some six or eight gentlemen and ladies of the court, who professed to be connoisseurs of poetry. There he called upon some young poet to speak in praise of one of the virtues, and, when he had finished, each in turn argued against what he had said. The King spent many hours in that way, to the great distress of his mother and "of everyone who wanted to see him in such calamitous times attend to necessary things and not to such affairs, even though at another time they might be praiseworthy." On occasions, when he was absent from important meetings of the royal council, he was known to be in the meeting of this so-called Academy. Someone nailed upon the wall of the room where these literary philanderings took place a Latin epigram which may be translated as follows:

"While France, crushed everywhere by civil war is falling into ruin, half buried in her own ashes, our King practices grammatical exercises in the midst of the palace, so that the high-souled man is able to say 'I love.' He is able to decline it, truly he does decline the verb and he who was twice a king may become just a grammarian." These stinging shafts came even closer, for the following epigram was sent by the Spanish Ambassador to Philip: "Henry by the grace of God King of France by his mother and of Poland by imagination, citizen of Paris, secretary of Monsieur de Cheverny, son-in-law of Monsieur Sieur de Vaudemont, esquire of honor and wigmaker to his mother." [1]

It was doubly unfortunate that in two years of his reign Henry III should have acquired this sort of a reputation, because never, since the death of Henry II passed the sceptre to the feebler hand of his sons, had France been in so much need of a King who could "mount his horse." For the

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 469; Cal. F. 1576, p. 242; A. N. K. 1537.

moment the restless ambition of the heir to the throne was stilled by the rich appanage he held in almost feudal independence, but the King knew his brother too well to feel any security that he would ever cease his restless plotting until he was in a position of independent power, without even a nominal superior. He had tried to take advantage of the factional fights of the nobles of Genoa to secure a principality for him there. So long as there seemed to be the smallest chance of success he had pursued the elusory negotiation of the English marriage, writing that if he might see his brother the husband of Queen Elizabeth he "would sing nunc dimittis with Simeon." Catherine had done her best to help him to attain "the greatest wish of her heart; to be called before she died the mother of so wise a princess." But, after they had learned that Elizabeth was endorsing the note of Condé to pay his reiters in Germany—though on condition that her name should not appear publicly in the transaction—they had given up the attempt as hopeless.[1]

The treaty of peace with the Huguenots and moderate Catholics had scarcely been signed, when the Prince of Orange, in the name of the two revolted Netherland provinces of Holland and Zealand, had sent a secret messenger to France to offer to the King's brother the title of Prince and Count of Holland and Zealand. Catherine was absent from the court when this offer arrived and we do not know what attitude she took towards it. Anjou, as he is henceforth to be called, refused it. The truth was that having appeared as the champion and defender of heretics, he was now endeavoring to make friends on the other side. He wrote to the Pope assuring him that he regretted very much the concessions made to the Huguenots. He intended as soon as possible to repress them and save "this poor desolate kingdom from ruin." What he had in mind was to marry one of his own nieces and obtain from her father, Philip II

[1] Neg. Tosc. IV, 40; Cal. F. 1575, pp. 65, 192, 204; B. N. C. C. C. 399 f. 25.

of Spain, a dot which would make him an independent prince. To promote this plan he sent a secret messenger to Madrid, who returned with nothing but vague and flattering words from Philip. The King was very much angered at this mysterious proceeding on the part of his brother and threatened, when the messenger returned, to have him bound hand and foot as soon as he crossed the border and sent to Paris. We do not know whether Catherine had suggested to her youngest son to become an aspirant for the hand of his niece. But, whether she had or not, being now doubtful of success in the English match, she wanted the Spanish match as a second string to her bow and thought there might be a chance to force it by veiling alternately beneath flattery or indifference, subtle threats that her youngest son, either as the husband of Elizabeth, or secretly supported by France, might become very dangerous as the leader of the revolted Netherlands. One thing was certain. There could be no peace in France till the wild ambition of the weak boy was satisfied in some way.[1]

In order to understand Catherine's method in her intermittent pursuit of this object for years, we must glance at what happened in the Netherlands in the summer and fall of 1576. At the very moment when the cause of those provinces, which had been engaged for eight years in a struggle for liberty, seemed hopeless, they were saved by the intolerable conduct of the Spanish army, which forced the rich, populous and orthodox southern provinces, up to this point faithful to Spain, to enter into negotiations with the rebellious Calvinistic northern provinces. The southern provinces dispatched a messenger to the King of France to explain that they were not rebelling against their lawful sovereign the King of Spain, but only preparing to drive out the Spanish soldiers, who, "for the last nine or ten years, have stolen our property, carried off our wives and

[1] Lettenhove (2) ctd. IV, 52, 72, 83; Theiner, 26 July, 1576; d'Ars, 81, A. N. K. 1541 f. 62.

violated our daughters without our being able to obtain any justice whatever for their ill deeds." It was very difficult to come together, because Holland and Zealand flatly refused to tolerate Roman Catholic worship within their borders, but a league was finally formed called the Pacification of Ghent. The answer of the Spanish soldiers to this attack upon them was to seize the rich and flourishing city of Antwerp, slaughter six thousand of its inhabitants and plunder it so thoroughly that it never regained a prosperity already declining on account of the war (November, 1576). As soon as it became known that all the provinces of the Netherlands were about to form a confederation, the Duke of Anjou changed his mind and aspired to head a resistance to Spain, composed, as his following had been composed in the civil war just closed in France, of both Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Estates General sent messengers to him saying that in case of need they looked to his protection and he replied that, since they had taken arms after ten years of intolerable oppressions and unheard-of cruelties of the Spaniards, he would risk his life and all he had in their defense, because he had dedicated himself from his youth up to nothing except the service of God and the succor of the afflicted.[1]

It is quite possible her younger son did this without consulting Catherine, but she at once saw the chance of using the situation in the Netherlands as a means of forcing Philip to grant him the hand of one of her grand-daughters, with some provinces as a marriage portion. She told the Spanish Ambassador: "I want to speak freely. Know that my son for a long time has formed a resolve, cost what it may, to marry one of my grandchildren, the daughter of your King." A formal offer of Anjou's hand was sent to Spain and underneath it, only half concealed, lay the threat of an invasion of the Netherlands by France if the offer was refused. Anjou's former followers, the Politiques, of course, regarded this plan for possible closer union between France

[1] Müller, I, 3, 13, 21.

and Spain with the utmost dislike. Montmorency sent a special messenger to the English Ambassador to tell him and to bid him tell the Queen of England, that neither he nor Damville had ever tried to promote this marriage, "for a Christian cannot allow this kind of marriage which is more seemly for dogs." [1]

This plan to force a Spanish marriage for Anjou by the threat of war in defense of the revolted Netherlands was a failure. Philip found a way out of the situation by large concessions to the rebellion. In the beginning of the year 1577 his bastard brother Don Juan, who had been appointed governor, accepted in his name the Pacification of Ghent and in "the Perpetual Edict" agreed that the Spanish soldiers should leave within twenty days and all other foreign troops as soon as they were paid. The problem of satisfying the ambition of her younger son still remained, therefore, unsolved, on Catherine's hands.

There was also another most serious danger which confronted her and the King. In all the disturbances and civil wars which had taken place up to the death of Charles IX, Catherine had been able to keep the Crown in a position to be, in the last analysis, the rallying point of all those who believed in the ancient religion—the great majority of the people of France. This situation had changed in some degree when the "Associated Catholics" of Languedoc had joined the Huguenots of that province under the lead of the Roman Catholic Damville and the Politiques had shown a disposition to join this alliance under Alençon and Montmorency. A period was now beginning in which the crown was to be caught as between the upper and nether millstones of the thoroughly organized Huguenot party allied with the Politiques and a straight-out Roman Catholic party, also thoroughly organized and filled with a feeling of bitterness against the Crown almost as deep as that of the Huguenots.

[1] A. N. K. 1540 f. 47, Comp. A. N. K. 1539; Gachard, V, 104; B. N. It. 1729 f. 906; Cal. F. 1576, p. 441.

The first prophetic warning of this new danger came to Catherine in the very widespread and serious attempt to resist the Edict of Beaulieu and break up the peace founded upon it. Active discontent with the peace had appeared almost as soon as it was made. When the King ordered a Te Deum sung in Notre Dame, the canons refused and it had to be chanted by the King's private musicians. This resistance of the choir was applauded by the population. A large number of other cities of the realm also found the peace "odious and abominable." In this situation Philip of Spain saw his opportunity. It had always been his policy, or at least so Catherine and her son believed, to do everything in his power to keep alive civil war in France in order to weaken his rival. It was said in the royal council itself that Spain had given Damville a large subsidy to maintain the war. The Spanish Ambassador said this was a lie; to which the King replied that he thought it was too ridiculous to pay any attention to when he heard it said in the council and Catherine, who had no opportunity to consult with her son about the answer, denied that anybody had ever said it in the council.[1]

Whatever may have been the truth about Spain's relation to Huguenot or Associated Catholic rebellion, certain it is that Spain at once began to support in every possible way the orthodox opposition to the peace. The first move of those who were opposed to the peace, was to attempt to prevent the surrender of the city of Péronne to the Prince of Condé as a surety and it was so successful that the inhabitants closed their gates and refused to receive any garrison whatever. The Spanish Ambassador was openly accused in the royal council of having exhorted the inhabitants to take this step. He showed so much knowledge of this and other things talked about in secret session, that a few days later one of the council said there was a Judas among them and demanded the Ambassador's arrest for

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 723, f. 57; Journal, 176; Arch. Vat. 25 June, 1576; Rel. I, 5, p. 261.

conspiracy, quoting how Francis I had told an ambassador of Charles V that he would arrest him if he did not change his conduct.[1] The Spanish Ambassador indignantly denied that he had been engaged in any such intrigues, but we knew he lied for he wrote to his royal master:

"It is true I have been particularly busy through a third person in urging the cities of Péronne and Toulouse not to receive the heretics, telling them that if they stand out for our holy religion they will be aided by the Catholics. . . . All these Catholics say that if this King fails them they will beg Your Majesty to come in and save the kingdom. . . . They have not caught me in any false Latin, though of course it is necessary to use it in order that the service of God and of Your Majesty, which are one and the same thing, may not suffer."

Catherine was much troubled and angered by this attempt to break the peace. She wrote at once ordering an investigation of the cause of the trouble at Péronne and sent a letter to Condé offering to hand over to him immediately another city in its place. She redoubled her efforts to raise the money agreed upon for the pay of the Huguenot reiters. It was a difficult task. The Swiss cantons refused to make a loan of a million in gold secured by the Marquisate of Saluces and the city of Lyons. An attempt to raise a loan among the foreign merchants assembled at the great Lyons Fair failed. They said they had lent 500,000 livres four years before and it had not yet been repaid. Partly as a consequence of this there had been many bankruptcies: "for instance, out of forty houses of German merchants, only six have escaped bankruptcy and they are represented only by agents trading on commission." Catherine sent more jewels to Venice, a diadem of six huge diamonds and four rings set with enormous rubies and somehow or other she managed to scrape together the necessary money; although she must have been much impeded by the extravagance of the King, who chose this moment to bring up from

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 57; A. N. K. 1539 f. 57, 74, 76, 1540 f. 15.

Venice the entire company of comedians to give a series of plays at Paris.[1]

It soon began to appear what was behind the refusal of Péronne to open her gates. Certain burghers of Paris had begun to form a union in defense of the Catholic faith and they enrolled a large number of members, many of whom were deceived by the pretense that the King secretly supported the union. They soon got into communication with the house of Guise and these princes helped them to formulate the League and extend it to Picardy through the medium of Jacques d'Humières, the leading noble of that province.[2]

So widespread a movement could not long remain unknown to the government. In the beginning of August, 1576, a gentleman from Picardy told the King that the cities of Normandy and Picardy were banded together to refuse the Edict of Pacification and that many other cities of Champagne and Burgundy had joined them. Soon after word came to the King from several sources, that this League in the name of the Holy Trinity was establishing itself among the cities and nobles throughout the whole kingdom. Its oath bound the members to stand for each other against any person whatsoever, for the defense of the Catholic religion, King Henry III and the privileges which France had enjoyed under Clovis. It was agreed that a chief should soon be elected whom every member would obey absolutely. Those who refused to join the League were to be treated as enemies and attacked in arms.

Catherine and the King determined to repeat the action which had been taken in regard to the Catholic League formed at the time of the interview of Bayonne, of pledging all princes and great nobles by an oath not to attend any meeting where anything was considered against the Crown. The Duke of Nemours, who with the house of Guise was

[1] Letts. V, 201, 203; B. N. It. 1729 f. 755, 761; C. C. C. 8 f. 198, 200; Frémy (2), ctd. 287.
[2] De Thou, V. 316.

suspected to be at the bottom of this new League of the Holy Trinity, immediately got angry and left court. The Duke of Guise and his uncle, the Duke of Mayenne, refused to sign the oath, saying it was an insult to a loyal man to ask him to sign such a paper, and in spite of Catherine's argument that they were asked to sign simply as an example to others, they persisted in their refusal, to her great wrath. But finally, when ordered by the King to sign on pain of being considered rebels, they did so, making at the same time a declaration that they did not sign of their own free will, but because they were compelled by the King.[1]

Two weeks later, additional excitement was aroused by the publication of the documents known as the Papers of David. David was a lawyer of Paris with a rather shady professional reputation but with a good deal of political influence in the neighborhood of the markets. He went to Rome, apparently in the train of the Bishop of Paris, who was sent on a mission to the Pope by the King. On his return to France, he died, and under the title of a "Summary of a Discourse Delivered Before His Holiness," the Huguenots published a document which they said he had been carrying. It pointed out the many civil wars of France followed always by a disgraceful peace, as a proof that the descendants of Hugh Capet had not inherited the apostolic benediction, which had been given only to Charlemagne and those of his blood. The proof that the Capetians had not the blessing, was seen furthermore from the fact that they had again and again died in the flower of their age without leaving successors and it looked as if this would happen to the surviving members of the house of Valois. If they did die without children, a heretic (Henry of Navarre) would be heir to the crown. In such case, all good Catholics should not allow the chance to escape which God had sent them by reëstablishing the posterity of Charlemagne upon a throne sanctified for them by the apostolic benediction. (The house of Guise claimed descent

[1] Arch. Vat., 11 Aug., 1576; B. N. It. 1729 f. 813; Cal. F. 355, 357, 358.

from Charlemagne.) The document then proceeded to sketch a course of action. An Estates General, assembled under such conditions that its results could be counted on, was to revoke the Edict of Pacification and grant the heretics a certain time to be reconciled to the Church. If they resisted, an army was to be prepared and the King was to be asked to give the command of it to the Duke of Guise. The Duke of Anjou, who had been chiefly responsible for the favorable edict granted to the heretics, was to be arrested and tried for treason. The Duke of Guise, at the head of a great army, was then to crush the heretics, finish the trial of the Duke of Anjou, shut up the King in a monastery, and take the crown with the permission of the Pope; in exchange for which he would swear to abolish forever the so-called liberties of the Gallican Church.[1]

The reasons for regarding this document as a pseudograph intended to injure the Guise party, are exceedingly strong, but, even without believing that there was then an actual plan on foot to shut up Henry in a monastery, there was quite enough to alarm Catherine and her son in the information they had about the spread of a league which would probably elect the Duke of Guise as its chief. They saw at once the vision of a new Coligny on the other side; the master of larger forces than those which had followed the lead of the redoubtable man they had killed on St. Bartholomew's Day.

The first thing to do was to see to it that the Huguenots, alarmed by this threatened attack upon them, did not again secure the leadership of the heir to the throne for a new revolt; for an appeal came to him from the Huguenots and Associated Catholics of five southern provinces asking him to act as their protector. Margaret has preserved for us in her memoirs the scene when the King

"called my brother into his cabinet with the Queen my mother and some members of his council. He represented to him what a menace this league which the Catholics commenced to make,

[1] De Thou, Bk. 63; Mem. Ligue, pntd. Vol. 1.

was to the royal authority; especially if they chose their own chief and should choose a member of the house of Guise. He begged my brother, as a son of France and a good Catholic, to help him in this matter, where the Catholic religion and his crown were in danger. He added that it seemed to him that, in order to bar the road to that dangerous league, he himself ought to become the chief to keep them from electing another chief. To prove how much zeal he had for religion, he meant to sign it himself as chief and to have my brother sign it and all the princes, lords, governors and others who had positions of authority in his kingdom. My brother could not then do anything else except offer him the service which he owed to his King and to the preservation of the Roman Catholic Religion."[1]

The King carried out the resolution which he thus announced to his brother, altered somewhat the oath of the League and sent it around to the various provinces for signature. He explained this action in a letter in which he told Damville that he had done all he could to show how disagreeable the leagues which were formed in some provinces of the kingdom were to him, but, seeing that did not stop their growth, he had thought it better "to have them made throughout my kingdom in the form you see to prevent them from taking another chief than myself." In some places, however, the King found great difficulty in getting his new oath signed. A formal protest was made against it on four points: first, that it took away the right of electing their own chief; second, that it asked for a fixed offer of forces to support the King instead of an indefinite offer; the article promising to protect those of the Reformed religion who kept quiet was objectionable; fourth, they would not promise to support whatever His Majesty should order after consulting the Estates, because, if he should be persuaded to tolerate two religions by the counsel of suspected persons, they could not agree to it. The King therefore must have opened the Estates of Blois in December, 1576, with the conviction that he could only maintain the toleration granted to the Huguenots by the Edict of Beaulieu at

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 898, Margaret.

the expense of a new civil war, in which the Catholics organized into the Holy League of the Holy Trinity under the lead of the house of Guise, would be the aggressors. Catherine had an open quarrel with the young Duke of Guise in which he was "very malapert with her." [1]

[1] Cal. F. 1576, p. 355.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE ORTHODOX ESTATES GENERAL

One of the Huguenot demands which the King had originally been most averse to granting, was the assembly of the Estates General. But he had discovered that it was not possible to get money to pay his debts except through the Estates General. His poverty had become so extreme that he felt he must sell some crown lands, but he could not give a salable title without some sort of endorsement. He had therefore called an Assembly of Notables, consisting of men nominated by himself from the various provinces. When they met they refused to act in the matter, saying that they had not been elected by the provinces and were only private persons. In addition the need of sweeping reforms in other matters besides the finances such as hardly could be undertaken without the help of the Estates General, had been brought very strongly to his attention by a petition of the people of Paris including the courts, the clergy and the burghers of each quarter. In answer to his request that they should give him 200,000 livres, they pointed out that, since the year 1560, when the civil discords began, the Crown had collected from Paris and other towns 36,000,000 francs and from the clergy 60,000,000 francs, besides other gifts and subsidies. In spite of the fifteen years' sacrifice of money and life, the condition of the realm was no better than it was at the beginning. The reason is the universal corruption of church and state. Simony is openly permitted. Benefices are held by married ladies who squander the revenues on their own pleasures. The people are corrupted by heresy because they are without religious instruction. Justice cannot be had because it is bought and sold in the courts. There are too many

office holders and many of them are notoriously incapable. Murder is unpunished. Great cruelties and barbarities are committed by the gendarmerie, which is no longer filled with gentlemen but with people of low origin. Enormous grants are made to private persons to the ruin of the state. Taxes are farmed to foreigners, even when Frenchmen offer the same terms. Blasphemy and usury flourish throughout the realm.

Such a document as this, solemnly laid before the royal council by the heads of the city government of that Paris which had backed him at St. Bartholomew, must have suggested to the King that the complaints of the people were no ordinary outcome of faction and that some unusual means must be taken to allay them.[1] He finally decided therefore that he must call the Estates General.

It was very natural that, as the Holy League of the Holy Trinity spread rapidly, the Huguenots began to be afraid of the very assembly of the Estates which they had made one of their chief demands in taking arms. Their leaders like Navarre and Condé sent word that they were afraid to come unless the Guise stayed away. The Guise, on the other hand, so far from being disposed to stay away, were apparently making preparations to come to the Estates supported by a strong body of armed adherents. The Huguenots suggested that an assembly should be held like that of Pontoise in 1561; only that each province should be represented by six delegates instead of three, and that three of these should be chosen from one religion and three from the other. They could hardly have expected that this proposition, which gave the minority of France the same representation as the overwhelming majority, would be acceptable to the crown. Damville wrote in the name of the Associated Catholics saying that, if the elections went on as they had begun, the Estates would be a farce, because, up to this time, "no one has been elected, except those whom

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 119, 161, 165; C. C. C. 252, f. 291; Arch. Vat. 17 July, 15 Aug., 1576.

the King has nominated, who are the most seditious persons in the realm and those who are most anxious for a renewal of the civil war." As a consequence of this feeling, the Huguenots, for the most part, kept away from the elections and when the Estates assembled there was only one man, a representative of the nobles of Xaintonge, who called himself a Huguenot.[1]

When the death of her husband gave Catherine de Médicis a position of influence in the French Government, no Estates General had met in France for seventy-six years. In the thirty years before her death, during which she retained authority, four Estates General were summoned: the Estates of Orleans in 1560, the Estates of Pontoise in 1561, the first Estates of Blois in 1576, and the second Estates of Blois in 1588. Of these four the Estates of Blois in 1576 were in a sense the most important. It is true that they made no such clear constitutional claim as those we read in the cahier of the Nobility at Pontoise, but the claims of Pontoise might be understood as applying only to the exceptional case of a regency; whereas the first Estates of Blois, meeting under an adult King, forced the reversal of a very important decision of the Crown recorded in treaties and a royal edict and made demands which looked in the direction of an increased constitutional control by the assembly of the nation over taxation and legislation. Catherine and all her sons hated the very idea of the Estates General and these comparatively frequent meetings during the thirty years of her rule or influence, are the best possible proof of the need and peril of the government.[2]

Letters were issued to every bailiff and seneschal of the kingdom in the middle of the summer of 1576, ordering elections to the Estates General of the kingdom, and assuring the electors that their deputies would find in the King "an entire good will to carry out completely whatever the said Estates may advise and resolve." These letters set in

[1] B. N. It. 1729 f. 843, 855; Arch. Vat. 1 Dec., 1576.
[2] B. N. It. 1729 f. 119, 168, 408, 1728 f. 505.

motion a rather complicated system, for during the first two generations of the sixteenth century the right of representation became very widely diffused and broadly based in the rural population of France. For the greater part of the kingdom the smallest hamlets had a voice in choosing representatives to an assembly in the chief place of the châtellenie. These were selected in an assembly of all the heads of families of a parish summoned, by notice read from the pulpit after mass, to meet, usually, in the place before the church. The deputies carried the written cahier of the village or villages: a list of complaints or wishes to which any member of the assembly had the right to propose additions. The assembly of the châtellenie sent its deputies with a summary of the complaints of these primary assemblies to the assembly of the representatives of the three Estates (Clergy, Nobles and People) of the bailliwick. They merged the complaints of all the châtellenies into a summary complaint to be carried to the Estates General by representatives elected by each order.[1]

Some of the districts did not send any representatives to the Estates of Blois. That came about in the greater number of instances, because the Huguenots who were in the majority in that district, did not care to send any representative to an assembly where the Edict of Pacification would be revoked. Not all of the districts sent representatives from each of the three orders. A number of the larger cities claimed the right to have special representation, but only Paris, Marseilles and Rouen obtained it. As a consequence of this failure the Estates of Blois represented preponderantly the rural population. The contemporary Protestant historians were unanimous in contesting the regularity of the elections for these Estates. Undoubtedly the Holy League exercised great influence and it is worthy of note that the greater part of the representatives of the third Estate were local royal functionaries. But too much weight should not be given to these facts; the League prob-

[1] Charleville ctd. 24; Babeau, Rev. Hist., 1883, p. 95; de la Tour, 491.

ably expressed the sentiments of a very large number of the electors and it was quite customary to elect the royal functionaries as representatives, because they were frequently the leading citizens. In addition, it soon became evident that the assembly was neither entirely under the control of the Holy League, nor overshadowed by the royal authority, and it seems fair to conclude that the resolutions of the Estates at Blois represented the wishes of the majority of the French Nation at that time.

The opening harangue of the King was very effective, for Henry III had the gift of words. He profoundly touched the assembly by comparing the prosperity of the reign of his father with the miseries of his own reign and begged them, laying aside all personal passion, to help him to reëstablish the realm. The Estates were inspired with a high idea of their own authority, and they put their finger at once upon the chief cause of their lack of power, the failure to call them regularly. Each of the three orders demanded that the Estates should be assembled at intervals of from two to ten years. The Clergy and the Third Estate asserted the old claim that there should be no taxation without consent. The Nobility, probably because it did not consider that it could be taxed at all and therefore ought not to express any opinion about taxation, was silent on the subject. More than this, the Estates gave very unsatisfactory answers to the request of the King for a subsidy. The Clergy replied that they would vote no money until they could be assured that it would be better expended than the sum voted in the great contract of Poissy. The Nobility replied that they owed their blood to the King, but not their money. Eight times the Third Estate refused to grant the King anything, even the smaller sum of which he had immediate need, saying that they had been expressly ordered by their constituents to vote no new taxes, but to ask a reduction of the old. They asked that the royal council should be reformed and made to consist of one man from each province, representing either two or each of the three

orders. There was of course a royal party who insisted that such interference with the prerogative would make the King only a valet to the Estates, but all these resolutions passed by substantial majorities. Perhaps the strongest claim to constitutional authority put forward by the Estates, was that they alone had the power to alter the fundamental law of the realm.[1]

The most pressing question before the Estates was whether the Edict of Pacification should stand. The Clergy voted without any discussion and the Nobility without much, that only one religion could be tolerated in the kingdom. The Third Estate, after a long discussion, decided by the smallest majority possible that "all the subjects should be united in one religion by the best means which the King might decide to employ." The minority, under the lead of Jean Bodin, the celebrated publicist and one of the founders of international law, voted for the amendment that "they should be brought into union by gentle and peaceful means and without war."

The name of Catherine has not been mentioned in the immediately preceding pages. She had practically no influence in the Estates, but their action belongs to her life because they make evident the conditions then forced upon the consideration of anyone attempting to exercise authority in France. The movement for the formation of the Holy League was skillfully guided by politicians, but it expressed a dominant passion in the hearts of the majority of Frenchmen. In the Estates General at Blois, the rulers of France saw themselves confronted with an incarnation of the national will and the national desires, stronger than any of their predecessors had faced for nearly a century, and the Estates suggested changes in the fundamental unwritten constitution which were most offensive to Catherine and her son: *e.g.*, their demand for direct legislative power and their request for regular meetings at fixed intervals.

Catherine had twice before in her life been threatened

[1] Pièces, Clergé, Arch. Vat. 30 Dec., Journals of Bodin, Nevers, de Faix.

with direct attack upon her conduct and influence in the government; by the Estates General at Orleans and at Pontoise. She had evaded or suppressed those movements: the first with the help of Anthony of Navarre, then titular protector of the Huguenots; the second through the influence of Coligny over the Huguenots and Moderate Catholic delegates of the Nobility. It is evident from a superficial view of what happened at the first Estates of Blois in 1576, that no one possessed any such influence over the delegates as Coligny had exercised at Pontoise, not even Guise; for the time had not yet come when he could show himself "King of the Estates General" as well as "King of Paris." Even if he had possessed controlling influence in the Estates, Catherine knew he would not be willing to use it like Coligny in 1561, to block an attack upon her, and she found it wise to keep quiet and remain very much in the background. When therefore there was serious talk of a demand for the removal of certain men from the royal council, although most of those named had been known as strong personal supporters of Catherine for years, she openly joined in the criticism of them and "talked more than anyone else of the mistakes they had made in the past." [1] On the side of the King also, Catherine felt obliged to be cautious, for it was now evident to her that her favorite son was not as inclined to depend entirely upon her advice as Charles IX had shown himself except for the brief interval when he had been so strongly impressed by the personality of Coligny.

Early in January the King called a special meeting of the royal council to decide what action should be taken upon the request of the three orders of the Estates to unite all his subjects in one religion. Two things made it evident that, if the King granted this request, civil war would begin once more. First the amendment offered by Jean Bodin that this should be done "by gentle means and without war" had been defeated—by a narrow margin but still defeated; secondly, the new Huguenot leader,

[1] Arch. Vat. 30 Dec., 1576.

Henry of Navarre, beginning to show, after an apparently frivolous youth, the iron will of his mother instead of the weakness of his father, had instantly taken up the challenge of that vote by surprising two royal cities. The question to be laid before the council was therefore an exceedingly grave one, and in accordance with an ancient custom when a very grave situation was brought before them, the members gave their opinion in turn and in writing. Catherine's opinion was delivered first at great length. She suggested the terrible dangers which

"this kingdom had met since this evil sect gained a foothold in it; which ought to make us recognize that the tolerance of it is very displeasing to God . . . who wishes to have pity upon this kingdom and will give you the grace to end it to His honor and to the repose and conservation of this kingdom and to your own great reputation. The best way to restore one religion and the most agreeable to a God who loves neither vengeance nor cruelty, would be to do so without the use of arms. To bring that about three men must be gained, the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé and Marshal Damville. Envoys must be sent to them and also delegates from the Estates.

"Damville is the person I am most afraid of, because he has more understanding, experience and firmness of intention. Therefore we must not spare anything to gain him, for, if he is gained, all the Associated Catholics will follow him and Navarre and Condé will not be able to make any resistance. Therefore offer him anything and everything that he wants and get the Duke of Savoy (Damville had always been a close adherent of Savoy) to help you persuade him. Condé is not very dangerous without Navarre and Damville and if you cannot persuade either or both of them, then prepare for war."

In that case:

"Form a commission of half a dozen men to somehow raise a million of livres and get the Pope to give you for four months two hundred thousand francs a month for, if you're going to have war, which God forbid, I want you to make so great an effort that the length of it will not ruin your kingdom."

She advised four armies,

"the first of Languedoc, to be commanded by Anjou (Alençon) with the counsel of the Duke of Nevers and assisted by the forces

of the League of that part of France. Another army would be needed in the northeast to stop mercenaries from Germany on the bank of the Rhine before they enter the kingdom. With his guards, reinforced by Swiss levies, the King must march through the centre of the kingdom, while Montpensier advanced in a northeasterly direction from Bordeaux to meet him, punishing rebels as he marches; so that, when the King joins him, he may be able to play the part of granting pardon. A fifth and smaller army, under the command of the Duke of Mercœur, brother of the Queen, should advance through Auvergne to cover Paris. To get money the King should confiscate the estates of all those who take arms against him, using a part to pay his army and another part to recompense those whose estates may be seized or plundered by the rebels. Embassies must be sent to Germany to keep the princes from helping the rebels, all Huguenots who remain quietly in their houses must be assured of protection and every effort must be made to guard all cities, bridges, and fords against surprise. The League must not only furnish men but also be asked for money to pay troops. The Estates should be asked to pay this present year all the debts of the King by which his revenues were impounded, in order that he might have money to keep up his household and prosecute the war if it is necessary to wage it."

We have also the written opinion of thirteen other members of the council, but inasmuch as the King had forbidden any suggestion of maintaining the Edict of Pacification, only one of them really discusses the question of peace and war: the Duke of Nevers. He openly advised the King to choose peace and not to risk his kingdom. "Those who at Lyons counseled you to refuse an honorable peace, caused you in the end to make a worse one." Most of the others, either by implication or by silence, suggest their feeling of the danger of war and several plainly hint at the danger of relying too much upon the Holy League. The opinions of the three members of the house of Guise are worthy of note. The Cardinal of Guise was the only counsellor who explicitly and strongly approved both of the Holy League and the war which was its chief object. Guise and his brother Mayenne spoke moderately and modestly.

It is hardly possible to read these fourteen opinions without seeing that the Council, if its deliberations had been perfectly untrammeled, would have told the King the Huguenots would never submit and advised him against risking the revocation of the Edict of Pacification. The most practical and the ablest of all, in spite of the obscure and involved sentences which she was unable to avoid, is Catherine's, but, with the exception of the Cardinal of Guise, she was the only one of the counsellors who spoke in flattering terms of the resolution of the King, which all saw meant a renewal of the civil war. But the King, either because of the strain of strong, almost fanatical, religiosity which ran through his complicated character, or because he was afraid to seem less zealous against heresy than the League, shut his eyes to the evident reluctance of his counsellors. He overlooked even the good excuse for avoiding war given him by the changed attitude of the Third Estate.

As the first flush of religious zeal passed and men began to realize that the resolution to reunite the realm in one religion meant a renewal of the civil war in the face of ruined finances, the argument of the small minority in the order of the Nobility and the large minority in the Third Estate, who had fought for toleration and peace, began to find new force in the hearts of those whom they had at first failed to convince. An anonymous writing circulated among them pointed out that the Huguenots were stronger than ever:

"They hold two hundred fortified places, each capable of stopping an army for six weeks. . . . Four wars have ruined the kingdom, what can you hope from a fifth? The cost of the first crushed the people with taxes, the second increased the burden by the destruction of the churches, the third added robbery, pillage and the plunder of the laborer, the fourth banished all discipline from our army. Do not plunge the kingdom into war. If you do, it will be engraved on the memory of posterity that, by a conventicle labeled the Estates General held at Blois, the general estate of the realm was miserably betrayed and delivered

as a prey into the hands of the Italians to be forever their subject and prisoner." [1]

The current ran strongly now in favor of peace, and, on the 15th of January, after a stormy session in which Bodin, the leader of the minority, was so roughly handled that the next day he wore his sword for fear of being insulted, the Third Estate passed a vote directing their orator to request the King to procure the reunion of the kingdom in one religion by peaceful means and without war. It was the same orator (Versoris), a leading Leaguer from Paris, who had presented their previous resolution and he betrayed his commission, omitting the new request of the Third Estate for peace. The sequel to this was a very stormy scene in the assembly and the attempt to hold a caucus on the part of the war men to prevent the Third Estate from getting their request before the King, on the ground that the Estates, being now adjourned, no new resolution could be passed. Bodin found his way into this secret meeting and pointed out to them that if the Estates were adjourned, as they claimed, they were guilty of a capital crime in meeting without the King's orders.

Just at this psychological moment the Duke of Montpensier returned from his mission to the King of Navarre. He was a man whose zeal for orthodoxy no one could question, and in the wars of the past he had been one of the most cruel opponents of the Huguenots. It produced therefore an enormous effect when he appeared in the general assembly of the Third Estate and spoke as follows:

"I believe no one of you suspects me of being anything but a good Catholic, but when I consider the ruin of this kingdom by the past wars, how much our neighbors profit by our miseries and try to sustain them, the debts of the King and the impossibility of paying them if the war recommences, that the battles we have fought for fifteen years have not brought back anyone to the true religion as a good reform of the kingdom might have done, when

[1] Cal. F. 1576, p. 451; B. N. Port. Font., 300 f. 181 (misdated), Comp. Bib. du Roy, Rec. de Pièces, I, 1358.

I see the misery of the poor people in all places I have passed in my journey, who with one voice, Catholic and Reformed, asked me to urge peace on the King, telling me of looting, of the violation of women, of the cessation of traffic and agriculture—finally, when I remember how the Emperor Charles V, when he had the German princes prisoners, was obliged to permit them to live according to their religion—all these things compel me to advise the King to peace and to try to soften the declaration he has recently issued to the Huguenots. It seems to me, gentlemen, you should have the same opinion and make the same request of the King."

The deputies immediately begged permission to hold a meeting, and concluded by a plurality of votes that the King should be begged by written request to reunite his subjects to the Roman Church without war,[1] which meant some degree of toleration.

In one direction the attempt of the Crown to carry out the wishes of the Estates and end the war by negotiation, met with an unexpected success. The Huguenots of Languedoc had for some time been discontented with Damville, the leader of the Associated Catholics. The result of this tension and of the flattering offers of the King and Catherine, was that in June he appeared in arms for the King and in a short time took twenty-seven walled towns of the Huguenots. The other Huguenot leaders, however, were not equally manageable and France was also threatened with the renewal of a foreign invasion. Duke Casimir returned to the King all the lands he had received in France and when the King would not receive them, the messenger left the title deeds on the table and announced that the Duke thought himself free from all promises. The report was started that all the Protestant princes, including England, Scotland, the rebellious Netherlands, the German Princes, the Protestant Swiss Cantons and the Huguenots, had joined together in a great league of religion, which had met at Magdeburg and agreed to raise an army of fifty thousand men. Many people suspected at the time that

[1] Bodin.

it was a forgery intended to frighten the King of France into making peace, and indeed it was. A little later Elizabeth tried to form such a league, but the effort broke down on the ill feeling between the Lutheran and Calvinist princes of Germany, which became so great that it was only with some difficulty that the Lutherans were persuaded not to condemn the doctrine of the Calvinists in a solemn assembly of the Empire.[1]

It soon became evident to close observers at the court that the Queen Mother, in spite of her neutral advice in the royal council, was thoroughly opposed to war and was doing her best to dissuade her son from it. The King was so determined on war that he even dismissed from the council the Bishop of Limoges, who was known as a strong peace-man, but called him back the next day when Catherine complained that an attack on him was an attack on her, because, whatever he had done in regard to peace, was all done by her orders. She added that before this attack on her was over many who had begun it would be sorry for it, and wept over the matter in her cabinet in company with her daughter. Catherine was warmly supported by the Duke of Montpensier, who went so far as to tell the King that having signed the Edict of Pacification he and his son would not take arms to break it. The two continued their efforts to alter the apparently fixed determination of the King, but it was some time before they produced any effect except to make those who knew something of the inside of life at court aware of the fact that the King and Catherine were at odds with each other.[2]

In spite of this sharp difference of opinion, the King continued to show his mother the greatest possible honor and was in the habit of visiting her every day. Her correspondence makes plain that her advice given in the coun-

[1] B. N. C. C. C. 29 f. 30, complaint of Huguenots of Bas-Languedoc; B. N. It. 1730 f. 17, 29, 59, fds. fr. 3129, 3332; Cal. F. 1577, pp. 538, 542, 586; Cal. F. 1577-1578, pp. 17, 89, 247, 301.

[2] Arch. Vat. 28 Jan., 7 Feb., 1577; B. N. It. 1729 f. 280, 963, 968, 1730 f. 9, fds. fr. 3231; Card. Guise to Duchess Nemours.

cil of January for the conduct of the war, if war was decided upon, was followed in all its details. It also shows that she was indefatigable in trying to borrow money and in writing to foreign princes to keep them from giving aid to the rebels who were trying to obtain help from all sources. Henry of Navarre even wrote to Philip of Spain trying to borrow twelve thousand scudi, promising in exchange to marry his sister to the son of the Duke of Savoy, to keep France from all league with the Turk, and, if the King of Spain wished, to furnish forces for a war against them. This offer met with a polite refusal. But not so the advances of the Huguenots to England. Elizabeth promised them secret aid and advanced money for their levy of German mercenaries. The better to cover up this action, she even hinted at the possibility of reopening the negotiations for her marriage with the Duke of Anjou. The intrigue was made evident to Catherine by some letters that were intercepted and she reproached the Queen of England with it. Elizabeth unblushingly denied the whole matter, bringing counter-charges of a plot in France for an attack upon Ireland, and the two queens followed their usual practice of closing the dispute by each presenting the other with an official falsehood it was possible for her to accept by shutting her eyes to the facts she unofficially knew.[1]

In raising money, Catherine was not helped by the extravagant habits of the court. It was a constant source of amazement and discontent that the King should continue to spend so much money in feasts and costly pleasures. After the capture of La Charité by his brother, he gave a great feast to him and his captains where the ladies-in-waiting, dressed like men in costumes of green silk, served at a table that was decorated in green. The green silk for this festival cost sixty thousand francs. A few days later, Catherine spent a hundred thousand francs more on another banquet in her château of Chenonceau, for which she had

[1] Girard, 1, p. 27, A. N. K. 1542 f. 556; Letts. Missives, 2, p. 132; Letts. V, 250, 269; Cal. F. 1577-1578, p. 5.

to borrow the money. The most beautiful ladies of the court, "half nude and having their hair down over their shoulders, were used in serving the banquet." That these costumes, which shocked some observers, were any more extreme than the latest universally accepted modes, may well be doubted. In the midst of these terrible straits for money Catherine did not spare even more personal expenses. She wrote to her almoner who was in charge of making a new palace out of a convent—for Catherine was never satisfied to live in the Louvre:

"I should like, if it's possible, that you should have the street alongside my house closed and also that you should send me the plan and have the garden put in order that this winter you may be able to plant it all, according to the sketch which I will send you by the first messenger. For if I return, which may be very soon, I should like to have the pleasure of finding it done, at least ready to plant and the allées all prepared and the canals made and the fountain in place, because, as I'm not any longer planning to build the gallery nor the church, you haven't anything to do except to level off the ground as far as I wish the terrace and to make the wall at the other end in order to form the new street after you have closed the other for the church. But when I have more money I will make it in the place which the King has given me." [1]

The war was not one of battles in the open field, but of ambuscades, surprises and sieges of cities. It took on, especially in the southeast, a character of increased ferocity, but both sides clung to the banner of religion. At the taking of Gap, the war cry of the assailants was "Christ," and of the defenders, "Jesus." The Huguenots found one partisan leader who inspired the same sort of terror as des Adrets, now gone over to the royal side. Matthew Merle, oldest son of a family of the lesser nobility, entered as a lad into the third Huguenot war and became Lieutenant of the Count of Peyre, whom he accompanied to Paris for the marriage of Margaret and Henry of Navarre. The Count

[1] B. N. It. 1730 f. 79; Cal. F. 1577, p. 586; de l'Estoile, 1, p. 188; Letts. V, 272.

was killed, but Merle escaped and helped by his old master's widow, raised a band of soldiers which rapidly increased. "He was short, heavily built and slightly lame. His hair and beard were pale and he wore two great turned up moustaches like the tusks of a wild boar. His nose was broad and snubbed and his furious gray eyes were sunk deep in his head." This figure of a guerilla partisan wasted the country with fire and sword and at the end of the war retired to a barony paid for by plunder and ransom money.[1]

In spite of the fact that the King's armies won two important towns and showed themselves superior in the field, it soon became evident that he could not sustain the war long enough to wear out the Huguenots. So, early in August, the Duke of Montpensier was again on his way to meet the deputies of the King of Navarre in order to negotiate a peace. The negotiations dragged for some time, because the King did not want to grant the demands of the Huguenots, but in reality he had no choice. His lack of money, the desertions from his army and the news that Duke Casimir was about to invade France with over twenty thousand mercenaries, compelled him to make peace. This was so evident that even the Duke of Guise, after it was made, wrote to the King that peace was "so necessary that a little delay in making it would have brought extreme ruin." Toward the end of September, the Te Deum for peace was sung in Notre Dame at Paris.[2]

This Peace of Bergerac, proclaimed in the Edict of Poitiers, September 18th, 1577, was one of the most lasting peaces which punctuated the civil wars of France during the lifetime of Catherine. It gave the kingdom eight years of rest, save for two short local insurrections ending almost as soon as they began and that sporadic fighting which was endemic in Dauphiny. The peace showed the swing of the pendulum back from the extreme Huguenot advantage

[1] Charronet, 115; Petitot, 38, p. 213.
[2] B. N. fds. fr. 3400 f. 17; It. 1730 f. 149; Cal. F. 1577-1578, p. 124; B. N. C. C. C. IX, 30 Sept.

gained in the previous peace of Beaulieu. Whereas that Edict permitted preaching in more than one thousand towns, this allowed it in hardly a hundred. The Huguenots were granted as cautionary towns for six years, only eight cities out of more than a hundred which they held. In short, the new edict permitted the Huguenots to exist, but gave them no opportunity to increase.[1]

[1] B. N. It. 1730 f. 149; Isambert, 14, p. 330; Nevers, 1, p. 290.

CHAPTER XXXVI

CHARACTER OF HENRY III. FAMILY JEALOUSY

Soon after the Peace of Bergerac, the President of the royal council, Morvillier, Bishop of Orleans, died. He had for many years been counted a faithful supporter of Catherine. Descended from one of those great families of the *robe longue* whose members divided among themselves so many offices of state, with one grandfather Chancellor of France and another First President of the Parlement of Paris, he had become a member of the royal council under Francis I and was the last of the men of that time who still remained on it. His death must have made Catherine feel that she was living among a generation who knew her not. She was concerned about his illness and wrote recommending him to take syrup of chicory mixed with rhubarb; for she had always been fond of dosing herself and prescribing remedies for her friends in illness. The loss of so faithful a servant touched her, and she wrote to the ambassador in England who was married to his grandniece: "The death of the late Sire of Morvillier having occurred to my great regret, I have very willingly granted to you the Abbey of St. Pierre de Melun, according to a wish he had expressed to me while he was alive and his great and notable services will be so continually before my eyes that I shall keep towards his family a very active good will." [1]

It soon became evident that the two problems which had faced Henry III at the beginning of his reign, the jealous ambition of his brother and the discontent of the Huguenots, were not solved by the Peace of Bergerac or the reconciliation of the two brothers, and since the Estates of

[1] Letts. V, 282, e.g. I, 575; III, 193, 304; VI, 49, X, 429, etc. Le Labourer qtd., I, 305.

Blois had refused to do the thing for which the King had assembled them—pay his debts—the situation was still complicated by the discontent of several of the most orthodox provinces with the heavy taxation. Apparently the King utterly failed to appreciate the seriousness of the situation and his conduct deepened the impression he had already made upon a large part of his subjects that he was effeminate and debauched. Not long after the signing of the peace, he gave a very scandalous confirmation of his reputation. At the marriage of one of the superintendents of finance, the King appeared after supper masked and at the head of about thirty masked ladies of the court. All were dressed in cloth of silver or white silk richly embroidered with pearls and other precious stones. The maskers began to act in such a way that the greater part of the wedding guests and all the "wisest ladies" withdrew and there followed in the presence of the King a very wild scene. For more than a year the King had been noticeably surrounding himself with a band of young courtiers to whom the people gave the insulting name of "mignons" or darlings. These mignons wore their hair long, "crimped and recrimped in the most artificial way, tucked up beneath their little bonnets of velvet as the women of the town wear it and the starched ruffles of their dress shirts half a foot long, so arranged that their heads above them looked like the head of John the Baptist on a platter. The rest of their dress was of the same sort and they did not do anything except gamble, swear, dance, bow, fight and run with women and follow the King wherever he went and fear and honor him more than God." [1]

Then the King founded a new order of the Holy Spirit, whose costume exceeded the strangest dreams of extravagance, with a cap of black velvet, coat and trousers of cloth of silver, shoes and scabbard of the sword of white velvet. The mantle was of black velvet bordered with fleur de lis in gold thread, mixed with tongues of flame and the initials

[1] De l'Estoile, 1, pp. 143, 225.

of the King in silver thread, the cloak lined with orange satin and adorned by a cape of cloth of gold, also embroidered heavily in cloth of gold and silver, with a great gold necklace around the neck made of the interlacing of the initials of the King, fleur de lis and tongues of fire, to which hung a gold cross richly chased and enameled with a white dove of the Holy Spirit in the middle. There was posted on the gate of the church where the first solemn meeting of this new order of the Holy Spirit was held, a terrible satire in which God is represented as addressing the members as princes of Sodom, and in the spring of that year the Pope wrote to the Nuncio: "His Holiness understands to his great grief that in the court of France such vice as cannot be described prevails, which, passing everything usual and all bounds of modesty, is without any doubt the reason for the wrath of God against that kingdom. His Holiness wants you to get the confessors of the King and his brother to attack bravely their evil lives and say the wrath of God will not leave the kingdom until they stop such things." [1]

The unspeakable satires circulated at court, the violent attacks of his enemies and the attitude taken by most modern historians in regard to Henry's relations to his mignons, have obscured the fact that, in surrounding himself with them, Henry had an idea of statecraft and that he saw in them something else besides companions of his pleasures. He had inherited all of his mother's passion for authority and, even though he lacked the will and the industry necessary for a ruler, he was not willing to be, like his brother Francis II, a mere cipher in the state, or Charles IX, absorbed in the pleasures of hunting and athletic exercise. He had the best mind of Catherine's four sons and he was fond of reading or having read to him Polybius, Tacitus, and especially Machiavelli. He came to the crown with the fixed intention of "freeing it from the

[1] Cluny Museum, de l'Estoile, 1, p. 301; Arch. Vat. 10 Mar., 1578.

yoke of factions and becoming a free and absolute king like his glorious ancestors." His mignons were selected from the sons of the lesser nobility and their fortunes were entirely dependent upon him. One quality they all possessed in the very highest degree and that was courage. The King wished to be surrounded by swords which belonged to neither faction and when he raised the ablest of them to the highest social rank and gave them important offices in the state, he undoubtedly deliberately intended to create in them a balance to the great hereditary families of the nobility who had been too strong for his brothers.[1]

Such a policy, even if it had been carried out in the most cautious way, was sure to awaken the greatest resentment. It not only crossed too many interests, but shocked too many ideas to be well received, and it "seems to those accustomed to have a share in the government that their authority is diminished whenever the King advances new subjects who do not depend on anyone but him." Among the first to resent the favor shown by the King to his mignons, was the King's brother, the Duke of Anjou. He had long kept around him a little band of favorite gentlemen, for the most part quite young, and his men and the King's new men soon found themselves literally at swords' points. The result was a series of desperate quarrels. Bussy d'Amboise, the leader of these ruffling young blades, had a quarrel with Caylus, a King's man. The English Ambassador, at Elizabeth's request, inquired about its origin. His report suggests vividly the tone of manners which prevailed among these comrades of the King and his heir. The conversation began with a dull and unmentionable witticism developed in a series of unprintable repartees of the country barroom order. Then "It is nothing so," saith Caylus. "Thou hast lied," saith Bussy. "You think," saith Caylus, "that you are the goodliest person in all this court, but there are others as goodly as you." "Thou hast

[1] De l'Estoile, Rel. App. 51. Davila (one of Henry's pages), III, 24, 129.

SAINT MAIGRIN—A MIGNON OF HENRY III, CATHERINE'S THIRD SON

From a painting in the Louvre

lied," saith Bussy. "Thou art a fool," saith Caylus. "Thou hast lied," saith Bussy.[1]

For the splendor and outward refinement of the court of the last Valois do not conceal a trait of rank coarseness which flourished in the atmosphere of civil war like weeds in rich untended ground during a damp summer.

Soon after this courtly interview between Caylus and Bussy, some of the King's men tried to kill Bussy, and Anjou went to the King to say that if punishment were not meted out he would leave court, where his faithful followers were always being insulted. Catherine took his part and said that, if the King did not dismiss his insolent young favorites, he would see the total ruin of the kingdom because the good old servants of the crown would all retire and he would find himself the most disconsolate King in the world. His wife threw herself at his feet and begged him to listen to his mother's words. The King promised to remedy the matter and gave his brother permission to go hunting for several days. At night Anjou ordered all his gentlemen to be ready to start early in the morning. But the King, after he had retired to his room, was persuaded by his mignons that it was not safe to allow his brother to leave Paris. He threw a nightrobe over his shoulders and went to find Catherine, bursting into her room with the remark that he had made up his mind it was very dangerous to allow his brother to leave and that he was going on the spot to have him arrested and to search his trunk. Catherine, thoroughly frightened at what might happen, put on a mantle and went with him upstairs to the room of Anjou. The King knocked loudly on the door, crying out who he was and ordering it to be opened. Anjou sat up in bed and ordered his valet to open the door.

"The King commenced to scold him and to say that he'd teach him what it was to make plots against his King, at the same time commanding his archers of the guard to clear the room and to carry my brother's trunk out of it." . . . "He him-

[1] Pasquier, 2, p. 343; Arch. Vat. 23 Nov. 1578; Cal. F. 1578, p. 712.

self searched the bed of my brother to see if there were any papers in it. My brother having a letter from Madame de Sauve, which he had received that night, took it in his hand to prevent its being seen. The King started to take it away from him. He resisted and begged him not to look at it and that made the King more anxious to see it, because he believed that this paper would be proof enough to put my brother on trial for treason. When at last he had opened it in the presence of the Queen my mother, they were just as much confused as Cato when, having compelled Cæsar in the senate to show the note which had been brought to him, saying that it was something related to the good of the republic, he found it was a love letter from his own sister."

The King, more angry than ever because of this mistake, put Anjou under arrest in the care of the captain of his Scotch guard, with orders that he should not be allowed to talk to anyone. Later Anjou begged the captain to go and ask Catherine to allow his sister Margaret to come into his room, which the King granted. Margaret, very much alarmed by this sudden message in the middle of the night, went back with the captain to her brother's room. Meanwhile the captain of the French guards had gone by the orders of the King to arrest three of Anjou's gentlemen, including Bussy.[1]

In the morning Catherine sent for some of the older members of the royal council, the chancellors and the marshals, and told them what had happened. By their advice she went to the King, who by this time had cooled off somewhat, and succeeded in showing him how dangerous it was to treat his brother with such severity. So he begged Catherine to make up the quarrel. She then went to see her younger son and daughter and persuaded them to a reconciliation. It was arranged in her room in the presence of the royal council. Anjou promised with an oath to be friends with his brother and they embraced "with tears of tenderness in their eyes." [2]

[1] Margaret.

[2] Margaret, B. N. It. 1730 f. 225; A. N. K. 1547, Feb. 6; Arch. Vat. 13 Feb.

But tears of tenderness and bitter anger lay very close together in the hearts of the over-nervous children of Catherine and a few days later Anjou made up his mind to escape from the Louvre at all hazards. The streets were too strictly guarded for him to hope to pass them, so he got his sister Margaret to provide a cord; which she did by smuggling it into her room in the case of a lute. She took supper with her mother on the appointed night and her brother, impatient to get away, came and spoke to her as she rose from the table, telling her in a low voice to hurry up and go to her room.

"Matignon, a clever and dangerous Norman who didn't like my brother and guessed that something was going on, said to my mother as she was going into her chamber, that my brother was planning to get away and wouldn't be in the palace tomorrow. He thought I didn't hear this, but I did, for I kept close to my mother and watched everything. When we got into her cabinet she took me aside and said: 'Do you know what Matignon said to me?' I said, 'I didn't hear it, Madam, but I saw it was something which troubled you.' 'Yes,' she said, with great emphasis, 'for you know I have given my word to the King that your brother will not run away and Matignon has just told me that he knows very well that he won't be here tomorrow.' " Margaret then describes the agonies of conscience which she felt over the choice of swearing to a lie or breaking faith with her brother. She explains the way in which she escaped both, by statements which the reader finds more difficult to distinguish from lies than she does. "My mother, not looking too closely at the sense of my words, said to me, 'Think well what you say. You must be surety for it. You will answer for it with your life.' I answered her, smiling, that that was what I wanted and saying good night I went to my room."

After she had gone to bed and her ladies-in-waiting had left her with her domestics,

"my brother and two of his gentlemen came in and we tied the cord on a stick and, looking down into the ditch to see that no one was there, with the aid of only three of my women and of the valet who had brought the cord, we lowered, first my brother, then Simier, pale and trembling, and then Conge, his valet de

chambre. He went to a house built against the fortifications, where Bussy had already made a hole in the wall; through which he passed to find horses and friends waiting and riding eighty-four miles in thirty-six hours, arrived at a strong town of his own provinces." (February, 1578.)

Margaret and her women put the cord on the fire, but it made so big a flame that the chimney caught fire and the archers of the night guard came and pounded on the door, demanding that it should be opened. Margaret bade her women talk softly through the door, telling them not to wake the Queen, that there was nothing the matter and that they would attend to any fire there was in the chimney; so that finally the guards went away. But before morning the King got word of his brother's escape and she was at once summoned to where the King was sitting on the edge of Catherine's bed

"in such a wrath that I believe that he would have made me feel it, if fear on account of the absence of my brother and the presence of my mother hadn't stopped him. They both said to me in one voice that I had told them my brother wouldn't go away and that I had gone bail for it. I said yes, but that he'd fooled me as he had fooled them; that anyway, he had only left in order to make preparations which were necessary for his enterprise in Flanders. That softened the King a little and he allowed me to go back to my room." [1]

From his refuge Anjou wrote at once a very humble letter to Catherine saying he had retired with his friends only because he was not safe at court and that he was still a faithful brother to the King. Henry gladly accepted her offer to follow him and persuade him to come back. Probably all three of them were oblivious of the rumors reported with great glee by her deadly enemy, the Spanish Ambassador, that all this trouble was fomented by her in order to get rid of the mignons of the King; "which is one of her principal purposes, in order that she may remain master of her sons and of everything else, because her mediation and

[1] Margaret, 149.

intercession is necessary to both of them." This reading of the situation was partly an invention of malice and also an outcome of the stupid idea that Catherine invariably employed a policy—which she frequently used—of playing one faction off against another in order that she might maintain her power between both. Her letters show plainly that she was not stupid enough to apply any such policy to this deadly dangerous quarrel between the King and the heir to the throne, which meant the ruin of the house of Valois if it continued.[1]

Anjou was in a position of advantage and he knew it. The great dissatisfaction among the northern provinces about taxation and the still unsettled disorders of the southern provinces about religion, made it very dangerous for the King to leave him discontented, lest he should again become a rallying point for rebellion. In addition he held such fortified positions on important rivers that a competent observer thought it would be easy for him to starve Paris in fifteen days. His mother spent eleven days with him, but we do not know much about what took place between them; indeed we know little except that she could not induce him to come back to court as she had hoped, for his heart was fixed, not on making trouble in France, but on accepting the vague flattering offers which were still coming to him from the Estates of the Netherlands. He readily agreed to undertake nothing against his brother, but she could not persuade him to refuse this offer. He sent gentlemen of his household to negotiate in the Netherlands and began to levy troops and to send them across the border. This distressed Catherine and the King and exposed France to the danger of war with Spain.[2]

His mother therefore determined to make a last attempt to dissuade him from this enterprise. She left Paris again about the beginning of May and got back soon after the middle of the month. We have her own account of the argu-

[1] A. N. K. 1547 f. 93, 97; B. N. It. 1730 f. 244.
[2] B. N. It. 1730 f. 337, 250, 258; Müller, I.

ments which she laid before her younger son in this second visit. It was wrong for him to levy forces without his brother's consent and his brother was not now able to help him. The King of Spain had sent word that if Anjou entered the Netherlands he would at once declare war against France. They were trying to trick him because several of the provinces had already elected the Archduke Matthias, the brother of the Emperor, as their protector. In addition the Protestant princes of Germany and the Queen of England were joined together to bring about peace in the Netherlands and they would object to his invasion. She could not persuade Anjou to abandon the enterprise, but she got him to promise that he would not go to Flanders until he had been made Protector by all the provinces and had four of the chief cities of the Netherlands put into his hands. She told the Spanish Ambassador that she had done everything she could to persuade him to give up this plan, but was sorry to say she had been unable to succeed. The Ambassador was not very much impressed with her assurances and thought the whole affair arose from her extreme desire for the marriage of Anjou to one of the Infantas. "As she does not dare to speak of it openly because she's afraid of a refusal, she is allowing him to arm in the hope that we'll be forced to make the proposal from our side." [1]

Both Catherine's account and the Ambassador's comments were true. Catherine was unable to persuade her son, but since she was unable to persuade him, she was not unwilling to make for him out of the situation the profit of a good marriage if she could. She sent Marshal Cossé to Anjou with a list of all the possible marriages he might make; a sort of review of the royal marriage market of the world. She did not see any great advantage in marrying either the Princess of Saxony or the Princess of Cleves, but if he wanted, the King would do all he could to make either of these matches for him. In Italy there was the daughter of the Duke of Florence, but she couldn't bring him any-

[1] B. N. It. 1730 f. 422.

thing but money, which would not be of much advantage. The very pretty daughter of the Duke of Mantua would be better, because she might receive as her marriage portion the Marquisate of Montferrat, to which his brother would add the Marquisate of Saluces, which would give him a nice little state south of the Alps. She made it evident that the match which still pleased her most was to marry one of his nieces, who ought to bring as a dot Franche Comté. "There is also the Princess of Navarre (Henry's sister), and if he wants to consider that they will take up the matter very willingly." They beg him to make up his mind about all these suggestions and to answer them. In addition to these attempts to divert Anjou from his enterprise, the King forbade anyone to take an engagement for military service on pain of death, and when he heard that some merchants of Lucca were willing to lend Anjou money he sent the Chancellor to stop the bargain. But in spite of everything Anjou continued his preparations to invade the Netherlands and early in July, he crossed the border. By treaty with the Estates General, he took the title of "Defender of the Liberty of the Netherlands against the Tyranny of the Spaniards." He agreed that he was to have nothing to do with the government of the country, but would maintain for their defense an army of twelve thousand men at his own expense for three months and, if the war was not finished then, an army of thirty-five hundred men so long as it might last. The King was persuaded by Catherine to make the best of a bad matter and to allow Anjou's household and Swiss guard to follow him.[1]

The influence of the mignons over the King seemed to grow and in the end of the spring a dramatic event gave it a very scandalous emphasis. His chief mignon, Caylus, quarreled, for some slight cause, in the court of the Louvre, with a favorite of the Duke of Guise. At five o'clock the next morning they fought at the horse market, each sup-

[1] Letts. VI, 14; B. N. It. 1730 f. 330, 373, 404, 412, fds. fr. 3291, 3389 f. 113; Müller, 1, pp. 329, 408.

ported by two of his friends. Two died in the field and one the next day, a fourth recovered after six weeks, one escaped with a slight wound and Caylus languished with nineteen wounds until he died at the end of three months. The King showed the most excessive grief, spending day and night by his bedside, buried him with the honors usually accorded only to princes and erected marble statues with flattering epitaphs in honor of the two champions. The epitaphs were mocked in a number of unquotable lampoons.[1]

Ever since the beginning of the year, most disquieting reports had been coming from the three southern provinces of Guienne, Languedoc and Dauphiny. Neither side would trust the other enough to lay down their arms and the continued attempts to surprise towns gave good ground for the suspicions of both. In addition there were many murders and duels, the bitter crop of vengeance from the war. The Edict of Pacification was manifestly not obeyed and, by the middle of the summer, it was greatly to be feared that civil war, blazing sporadically, would break out again and involve the whole south.[2]

As had been the case for many years, everybody looked to Catherine to do the most difficult task; especially when the task was one of personal adjustment and reconciliation. In September 1578 she started on what she expected would be a three months' journey, with the purpose of quieting the southern provinces and so destroying the danger of a renewal of the intrigue between her younger son and the Huguenots, for she knew that he was already discontented with the Estates of the Netherlands, because he was not getting from them the power he had hoped to receive. She told her fears about his attitude in a long conversation with the Venetian Ambassador before she started, pointing out that the King was in very weak health and had no children

[1] De l'Estoile, 1, p. 243; de Thou, V, 539.

[2] B. N. It. 1730 f. 196, 207, 240, fds. fr. 3206 f. 43, 3340 f. 33; A. N. K. 1578 f. 53; Cal. F. 1575, p. 534; 1578, p. 655.

and that Anjou and his descendants would in all probability inherit the crown. He already had a larger estate than any son of France ever had and an income of over a million francs a year, "which by the laws of this kingdom is forbidden; for no son of the King can have more than sixty thousand francs income, and I am the cause of his being so rich. But with all that he is not content either with the King or with me because in truth he has too ambitious a mind." "Nevertheless she had good hopes that she could so manage affairs that he would not again rebel against his brother." [1]

[1] B. N. It. 1730 f. 457. "The Queen Mother said all this to me."

CHAPTER XXXVII

JOURNEYS OF PACIFICATION

During this long journey, which stretched to fourteen months, Catherine wrote almost incessantly to the King and the mass of her correspondence which has survived shows, that in spite of fatiguing stages which killed her horses and wore out her attendants, in spite of gout, which crippled her fingers and colic which kept her in bed, she stuck to affairs with an indefatigable industry. For Catherine was not only "a friend to feasts and festivals" but also, in all matters put under her authority, rolled the details of public business like sweet morsels under her tongue. The prolixity shown in these letters is as remarkable as their industry. It is to be doubted whether her son read them all with care; for he did not always answer them promptly, and to follow what she did in detail would be to wear out the patience of any reader. Nevertheless these letters are of the greatest importance for an understanding of the character of Catherine. They enable us to see her at work handling difficult pieces of administration and very delicate negotiations, explaining in the frankest way what she hoped to do and how she did it. They show both her strength and her weakness as a ruler.[1]

They are singularly free from any large or statesmanlike ideas of a constructive character; indeed that is true generally of the entire correspondence of Catherine. If de l'Hospital in those great reforms of administration which he attempted to bring about in the Ordonnance of Moulins, received any active assistance, or even any very great sympathy or aid from Catherine, we do not know it. All that

[1] Ven. Amb. Letts. VI, 86.

we know is that she kept him in office for many years against serious criticism and opposition. There is no reference in her correspondence to the great Ordonnance of Blois (May 1579) which was drawn up at this time, "one of the monuments of ancient French Legislation," except a letter congratulating the King that it is ready for publication "because that will content your people." Apparently she regarded it only as a disagreeable necessity which must be conceded to the complaints of the Estates of Blois; at best only as a means of putting oil upon the wheels of government and saving the King from trouble. Neither so far as we know had she displayed any great interest in the monetary reform which had been carried out as the result of the work of a commission about a year before. When, however, any crisis arose which threatened the authority of the Crown, Catherine showed ability to analyze and grasp the essential elements of the situation, industry and skill as an organizer and infinite patience in handling men, together with subtlety in playing upon their lower motives.[1]

What she did at Bordeaux, where she spent nine days, can be taken as a sample of her way of working. She gives a long summary of it in a letter to her son written the night before she left the city. She explains her object at the beginning by telling the King that hereafter he will be very much better obeyed, both by the municipal authorities and all the people, because, as dexterously as she could, she has removed all occasion for division and tumult. In the first place she has completely suppressed a religious fraternity which had made a great deal of trouble. The way she did this is vividly described for us by Brantôme, who was present. One Sunday morning when she was walking in the garden of the Bishop's palace (Catherine was very fond of dispatching business while walking in a garden) a delegation waited on her to point out how useful the "Confrérie" was to the public weal. "Without preparation, she answered

[1] Picot, G., II, 391; Letts. VI, 273; de Thou. V, 393.

so well, proving how odious such an association was, that they looked at her in confusion. She concluded: 'Now I wish and the King my son wishes, that your association should be entirely abolished and never spoken of again. . . . Otherwise I will make you feel what it means to disobey the King and me.' "

In the second place, she had arranged that mass should be said regularly in every parish, and in the third place, as she had seen at a glance in passing through many towns within the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Bordeaux that justice was very badly administered by it, she called before her four presidents, ten of the counsellors, the attorney-general and the advocate and had informed them of the complaints which had been laid before her of abuses, "miscarriage of justice and peculations daily committed by them as a court." She had then told one of her secretaries to lay before them the accurate details of these charges and he had done it to perfection. She had followed his remarks by telling them that if they did not do their duty the King would make them feel his displeasure.

In the fourth place, she had drawn up a series of regulations to keep the peace in the city and had established a council to enforce it.

In the fifth place, she had found out the names of a number of people of both parties whose attitude was too passionately partisan to make it safe for them to remain in Bordeaux. She enclosed a list of these men and asked the King to write each of them a personal letter. The first, who was leaving in a few days to go to the house of his nephew, ought to be advised to remain there for some time. The next ought to be summoned to court to make a report upon the exercise of his functions.

"He previously expressed a desire to go to court, but as I understand he now says he has changed his mind, he ought to understand from your letter that you won't take any excuse for his not coming. In addition Lange wants to leave the city and I wish he could be given the means of doing so."

Perhaps the King might feel like giving him one of the new presidencies recently constituted in the Parlement of Rouen.

"So far as concerns the advocate du Sault, I am thoroughly convinced that he is such a turbulent person that he ought by no means to come back to this city, unless the King wants to see him begin again his troublesome intrigues. Brother John Darnais, a Cordelier of this city, has in the pulpit attacked the royal race from which the King is descended and abused the magistrates of the city who have complained of him to me. I have therefore begged the Archbishop to make him leave the city at once and have written a similar request to the General of his Order. I send you notes of some of his utterances which I have obtained from trustworthy persons and he ought to be punished for them."

In the sixth place, she received a number of complaints from the Parlement of Bordeaux in regard to the rules for the establishment of the mixed court of justice granted in the Edict of Pacification. President Nesmond and the Attorney-General will lay these before the King and they ought to be amended as soon as possible so as to prevent the stoppage of justice and the great expense which arises from the conflict of jurisdictions.

Seventh: delegates from various dioceses of this province of Guienne have presented to her remonstrances, which bear a suspicious resemblance to those laid before the King, already, by the clergy of Lyonnais. She has handed them back without any reply, nor any promise to forward them to the King. Nevertheless, she has kept a copy of them which she sends in order that the King may see them and take counsel about what he had better do about the whole matter, which consists largely of a request to be relieved of heavy taxation.

Eighth: Pierre Arnauld, a lieutenant of Perigord, has presented a petition for advancement endorsed by persons of honor and quality and the King ought to keep him in mind for the first suitable vacancy.

Ninth: A municipal magistrate has presented to her a number of requests. She has partially granted some of these and sends the others for the King's consideration and speedy reply.

Tenth: When she passed through Poitiers and other places for which Marshal Cossé had been appointed royal commissioner to establish order, she could not discover that he had done very much, and she had written to him about it. She begs the King to renew his order to the bishops to reside in their dioceses and to provide priests for every parish within them.[1]

Catherine's ability to analyze a delicate situation and grasp its essential elements, is shown in a letter written about two weeks after this account of her administrative work at Bordeaux. She writes that she has asked the advice of Marshal Biron (royal commissioner for Guienne) upon "the three principal points of your present affairs, the execution of the Edict of Pacification, Flanders, where your brother has so recklessly involved himself, and the evil resolution of some of your provinces following the example of the assembly recently held in Burgundy." She gives a summary of what Biron had to say on each of these points and it is evident that it is a delicate way of suggesting to her son her own advice.

The Edict ought to be perfectly established in all the provinces of the kingdom.

"In regard to Flanders he gave me the strongest reasons for his judgment, that, since your brother is so thoroughly involved in Flanders, you couldn't do more wisely than help him strongly. He pointed out to me a number of things which the King of Spain had done to keep alive the civil war and ruin your kingdom—among others his willingness to ally himself with the King of Navarre, of which Biron said he had seen the proof in several letters. . . . You will take it in good part, my son, if I tell you word for word what passed between us and you will excuse me if, in regard to all that, I do not give you any advice for the present." [In regard to the third point the Marshal thought that if

[1] Letts. VI, 40.

the Edict should be so well established as to bring peace and union there was no need of being afraid of anything else.] "I beg you, my son, to have this letter burnt as soon as you have read it."[1]

Catherine felt that the chief object of her journey was to make arrangements which should bring about the enforcement of the Edict of Pacification. Indeed, she "firmly believed" that the very existence of the kingdom depended upon the maintenance of the Edict. She was shrewd enough to know that she could not possibly succeed in this object, without the full co-operation of the King of Navarre in removing the suspicions and suppressing the disorders of the Huguenots. She therefore arranged for a conference with him, and early in October, he appeared at the rendezvous; an isolated country house. He was escorted by "a very handsome troop of a hundred and fifty gentlemen riding fine horses." It was agreed that commissioners from each should meet to draw up articles setting forth a common agreement of what was necessary to put the Edict into execution. Catherine did not feel she had accomplished much in this first interview and wrote that there were a good many around the King of Navarre who did not want peace. It was six weeks before the two met again, after Catherine was nearly worn out by the delays of the King of Navarre, and the interview was almost immediately broken up. In the midst of a ball given by Catherine, a messenger entered and whispered in the ear of the King of Navarre. The King and his trusted adherent, Vicomte Turenne, quietly left the room and were mounted before anybody noticed that they were gone. Word had come to them that the town of Réole, one of the cautionary towns given to the Huguenots by the Peace of Bergerac, had been surprised by the Roman Catholics with the connivance of a treacherous governor. Henry of Navarre and a band of faithful followers rode hard until he reached the little

[1] Letts VI, 95.

Roman Catholic town of Fleurance which they immediately seized, driving into the citadel those of the inhabitants who tried to resist.[1]

Catherine at once ordered the town of Réole to be returned to the Huguenots and confirmed Henry's seizure of Fleurance but Huguenot suspicions were renewed and it was ten weary weeks before the conferences which now included deputies from the Reformed churches, were resumed at Nérac. They were long and difficult. Each side accused the other of bad faith and during all this time men who were manifestly nothing but brigands claimed to be active in the interest of one or the other of the two religions, and word of murders and revengeful countermurders came to Nérac. These things increased suspicion and Catherine received warning that the Huguenots "had planned to take revenge for St. Bartholomew," to which she did not pay much attention. When they were all ready to come to agreement, the whole negotiation nearly broke down on the refusal of the Huguenots to surrender the cities which they held, alleging that, unless they had had a chance to retreat to La Rochelle at the time of St. Bartholomew, they would have all perished like the others. They demanded to be allowed to garrison and hold fifty-nine cities, "in all of which the inhabitants are either all, or at least two-thirds, Catholics." Long disputes followed on this point. They first came down to twenty-four cities, and finally stood on the demand to hold fifteen cities for six months. Catherine granted this because she thought it was better than allowing them to continue to hold the two hundred and fifty-eight cities which were in their hands from which "the King at present gets no revenue." This was a very important consideration, because the monetary difficulties of the crown were terrible. Catherine had written to the Duke of Florence to borrow five hundred thousand francs at ten per cent, even suggesting that he should order

[1] Letts. VI, 6, 38, 46, 52, 117; d'Aubigné, Bk. 9, Ch. 11.

the merchants of his duchy to lend it to the King of France.[1]

Then at last, after five months of the most tiresome and intricate negotiations, Catherine made the Agreement of Nérac and could write to her son and her dear friend, the Duchess d'Uzès, "amid infinite shrill cries of accusation from one side against the other" by which her ears were continually "so deafened during many days that I am astonished it didn't make me ill," she had "accomplished what one would have thought to be impossible. God be praised for it for without Him I never could have put it through." (March, 1579.) But as soon as she had contented the Huguenots, it was necessary for her to make sure that the Catholic nobles of the province would accept the result. Her brief address persuaded them to stand by the peace and accept the will of the King. "He is a Catholic prince, as much a Catholic as it is possible for anyone to be. He wishes to preserve the authority which God has put into his hand and he loves you more than he loves himself. If the honor of God, the good of this state and your preservation had required that he should follow the way of the sword, he would not have shrunk from it, but he has learned by experience, and everyone has been able to see that the sword hasn't brought anything but evil." [2]

These conferences which had brought Catherine so much labor and vexation had been marked by a rather reckless gayety not entirely congruous with the terribly serious situation under discussion. The Duke of Sully recalled long after, with regret chastened by philosophic disapproval, the days when as a young cavalier in the train of Henry of Navarre, "he had talked no longer of arms but only of ladies and love, playing the gallant like all the rest and thinking of nothing but laughter, dancing, sports and amourettes." D'Aubigné, a poor young Huguenot noble

[1] E.g. Letts. VI, 138, 139, 220, 245, 305; Letts. VI, 62, 245, 260, 265, 268, 277, 278.
[2] Letts. VI, 286, 292, 453.

who handled the pen and the sword with equal skill, wrote of it with satiric humor out of the more puritan temper of his later years. He had spent several years in the Valois court with his young master, exchanging rapier thrusts with the men and repartees with the women. He knew well the gay band of Catherine's ladies-in-waiting and it was doubtless one of them who betrayed to him their secret and merry councils of war where, preparing to impress the delegates of the churches, they trained themselves "under the lead of that little clown Mademoiselle d'Atrie in what they called consistorial language, phrases like 'to approve the counsel of Gamaliel,' to say that 'the feet of those who bring peace are beautiful,' to call the King 'the Anointed of the Lord,' to ejaculate often 'God be judge between me and you.' They called this 'the language of Canaan' and practised it with bursts of laughter while the Queen was going to bed." [1]

During the conferences, which produced this Agreement of Nérac complementary to the Treaty of Bergerac, Catherine had other grave dangers to consider beside the renewal of the civil war in the four southern provinces of Guienne, Languedoc, Provence and Dauphiny. The situation in some of the northern provinces where the Huguenots had very little power, had been ominous before she left court. In the end of February the Spanish Ambassador had written to his master: "I have heard from one who is in the plot that, since this last peace, the Catholics of the realm, . . . thinking themselves on the road to total extermination, have made a great conspiracy of all Catholics with very wide connections. . . . They plan to seize the Queen Mother and Anjou and put them in prison. . . . They would tell the King that they are loyal vassals, . . . but they would compel him to reduce taxes, to banish heretics from the council and to make war on the Huguenots." [2] Catherine and her son did not know of any such plot and probably it was represented to the Spanish Ambassador as

[1] Sully, 27, 34; d'Aubigné, V, 363.
[2] A. N. K. 1547 f. 98.

much more definite than it was, but they were perfectly aware that there was an enormous amount of discontent in the northern part of the kingdom.

The Duke of Montpensier had summed up the situation in a remonstrance addressed to the King in the middle of March, 1578. He writes that there are great complaints and suffering among the subjects who are crushed by taxes that do not profit the King because they are often given away before they are collected and worst of all to people who do not deserve them. "If you knew how things were going on you would not suffer it." In the end of spring, an assembly was held in Burgundy to which the governor was refused admittance. It was resolved to send six envoys to the King to say they would pay no taxes beyond what had been paid in the time of Louis XI, and these spokesmen complained that the poor people were ruined to collect money to waste in debauches and give to mignons. After Catherine's departure, this discontent with taxation began to take a very threatening form in the city of Paris; where it was, as usual, brought to a point by an attack upon the Italians. Libels against them appeared in great numbers, of which the following may serve as a specimen: "Messiri, Poltroni, Scorpini, Sardini, and all your accomplices, lords of Italy, all the dregs of hell, greetings. Italian inventors of subsidies worse than parasites, your avarice and unlimited greed have sunk us into such misery that there is not a cradle in France from which the cry for vengeance against you does not arise." [1]

A little later when it was proposed to lay a tax of fifteen per cent on the clergy, they put out an address to the nobility which stated that France was so oppressed by new taxes that it was on the verge of ruin. . . .

"In spite of all the money the clergy have voted to the Crown, their privileges are trampled under foot and the order is in danger of being reduced to a position where it can be taxed like civilians. That concerns the nobility, because, if they looked

[1] Montpensier to King, 12 Mar., 1578; A. N. K. 1548 f. 80, 92, 1549 f. 54.

carefully they would see a large number of benefices held by nobles. If the incomes of these benefices are destroyed you will have to provide out of your estates for your sons and when God has given you many, your estates will be cut up and the principal and greatest families of France will become powerless through poverty. Because if the privileges of the clergy are attacked it will be an example to attack yours and you have not kept them so inviolable as you think even now. There are heavier taxes on salt and you use more salt than the commonalty. There are taxes on inns, but you pay them because you and your servitors use inns a great deal. Silk is your proper dress and the taxes on silk hit you. These are beginnings of attacking your privileges. We ecclesiastics, who are for the most part your sons, nephews and cousins, beg you to join us in showing the King how badly his finances are administered and how his people are too much oppressed. The King is surrounded by flatterers who grow rich and hide from him the evils of the government. France is near to ruin and they are growing great on her ruin. We expect your help in a work so useful to France and the King." [1]

In October, 1578, the provincial estates of Burgundy met and endorsed the resolution to pay no taxes introduced since Louis XI. The provincial estates of Normandy and Brittany took action which showed a similar state of discontent, and the Estates of Auvergne joined them; while in Normandy some two thousand gentlemen bound themselves together by oath to resist the King if he tried to collect the new taxes.[2] (Nov. 1578.)

In regard to this situation among the Catholic provinces, Catherine, from time to time, had written her advice. So far as Champagne was concerned, she urged the King to go stag hunting toward the north and then to summon several of the most factious leaders to join him, to show them great honor and to take them back with him to court. In addition he ought to suspend collection of the taxes and gain time until he could make an agreement with Henry of Navarre and the Huguenots. "If he can do that, I can bring to him five hundred gentlemen from these parts who are

[1] B. N. It. 1730 f. 297, 305.
[2] B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 7742 f. 43 fds. fr. 3320 f. 63, 3389 f. 91; It. 1730 f. 509; A. N. K. 1549 f. 95.

very strongly attached to his service." She felt quite sure that "these troubles are fomented by some who ought to be the most faithful to you." He should give permission to hold the estates of Brittany, but send there before the meeting some very capable man, thoroughly devoted to his service, who could help to explain away the evil impressions which were prevalent in regard to his intentions. When the King answered the demands of the deputation from the Estates of Burgundy and Normandy by withdrawing taxes which seemed absolutely necessary for the support of his government, she wrote, "that was very well done. There's no help for it. You must look elsewhere to find the gentlest means you can to live and to sustain your estate. Talk to the most manageable of the deputies singly and engage their good offices on their return to the province. If that doesn't do any good, at least it can't do any harm." [1]

Meantime things had not been going well with the Duke of Anjou in Flanders. His army had shrunk from desertion on account of lack of pay and the Estates of the Netherlands had not granted him the authority which he thought he ought to have. At the beginning of 1579, less than six months after he had left France, Catherine could write to the King she thanked God to hear of the resolution taken by her son to come back to France "with the firm intention, as he writes me, to show you all the obedience he ought." The restless boy, who turned like a spoiled child from one thing to another, was again filled with the idea of becoming great by marrying the Queen of England. His mother had never quite given up her hopes of making this match and, during the months of her son's absence in the Netherlands, she had written to Elizabeth most flattering letters. Elizabeth had renewed this long drawn out flirtation of state, suggesting that Anjou should come to England. She intimated that if she liked him, she would probably marry him. He wrote to his mother to ask her advice, and she replied that he ought to do his best to get

[1] Letts. VI, 60, 65, 103, 274; A. N. K. 1552 f. 43.

her to come to an agreement on all the articles of the marriage contract before he went, but, nevertheless, if she would not do that, he still ought to go, provided, before he went, she would give her promise about certain matters to the King, not verbally, but written and sealed with the great seal of England. If she would not do this, it was a sign that she did not really want to marry and he ought to marry somewhere else. Let him do it and bear himself toward the King as he ought to, for she knows "that the King loves him and will help him so far as he can to put a crown on his head." [1]

This good advice prevailed with Anjou, and, not long after his return to France, he suddenly started out, accompanied by only two gentlemen, to go to court. He arrived at two o'clock in the morning, went at once to see the King and said he had come that way to make plain his good will. The King embraced him and both wept for joy. They slept in the same bed and appeared the next morning together in public. For five days Anjou was the center of great festivities, and then returned to his province with the written promise of the King to make him Lieutenant-General "as soon as the Queen our mother has come back." [2] (March, 1579.)

But Catherine was for many months to be absorbed in her difficult task in the south. She seems to have thought at the beginning, that the negotiations with Henry of Navarre which brought about a tolerable pacification of Guienne and Langudeoc, were the most difficult part of her mission, but she was mistaken; the work which awaited her in Provence and Dauphiny was even more difficult.

The situation in Provence was exceedingly complicated. In addition to the three factions of the Catholics, Huguenots and Politiques, there were now in existence three other factions or parties which had very little to do with differences of opinion about religion; the Carcistes or Marabouts,

[1] Letts. VI, 35, 112, 203, 273, 275.
[2] B. N. It. 1731 f. 10; A. N. K. 1553 f. 9.

the Razats and the League of the Communes. The first were the supporters of the Count of Carces and got their name of Marabouts because they wore beards. The second got their name Razats, probably, because they were smooth-shaven. The Razats included in their party almost all the Huguenots and also a number of Roman Catholics. The question at issue was whether or no Carces should be supplanted as Lieutenant-Governor by a royal appointee who would enforce the edict and at first the Razats were fighting in defense of the royal authority. But the war had rapidly degenerated into little else than a struggle for ambition, plunder and vengeance on the part of two factions of the nobles, and the worst of its burden fell with crushing force upon the peasant inhabitants of the villages and small towns. In the spring of 1579 the village of Callas rose against a particularly brutal lord of the manor under whose exactions they had long groaned, killed him and plundered his château. They were joined by their neighbors and under the cry "Guerre aux châteaux," the peasants and townsmen rose in every direction, plundering and burning. They formed a sort of a rough League of Communes for self-defense and became friendly with the Razats.

All three of these parties sent envoys to Catherine and laid before her a terrible list of complaints. Catherine, who was always alarmed at anything that looked like increasing the power of the people, thought the movement of the communes, which had extended also to Dauphiny, a very serious matter. She said it was due to the greed of the seigneurs, who had tried to collect from their feudal subjects more than they owed and also to the attempt of the subjects to escape from their just dues. It would be a difficult task to appease the quarrel between the two factions of the nobility (Carcistes and Razats) who had fought so savagely that there was "no sort of wickedness, the most inhuman, villainous and execrable which it was possible to speak of, which was not mentioned in their mutual ac-

cusations." [1] She ordered both sides to disarm and sent the Corsican and Albanian mercenaries out of the province. She ordered the Razats to return the royal artillery which they had seized and to retire, the gentlemen to their châteaux, the communes to their villages. She arranged to have neutral judges sent in to the province, persuaded many to acknowledge the authority of the King's illegitimate half-brother, the Grand Prior of Malta, as Governor and wrote hopefully that, although the King had been in danger of being put in the position "she and his brother had been in when his brother was only ten years old, she now felt sure that, if he would enforce the observance of the Edict of Pacification, the end of the year would see him his own master." [2]

She was worn out by her labors and filled with longing to go back to Paris. She became conscious of this chiefly as an intense desire to see her son the King, which appears again and again in her letters "as the thing I most want in the world." The strength of this longing was doubled when she heard of the King's illness and, at the news of his recovery, she wrote to her old friend the Duchess of Uzès:

"My Gossip: I have been much troubled and with good reason for it is my life and I don't want to live without it and I believe God has had pity on me because I have had so much sorrow and so many losses—of husband and children. . . . Believe me it is a terrible pain to be far away from one loved as I love him and to know he is ill. It's like dying by a slow fire and I know it is not possible to have more pain and anxiety than I have had. . . . Send me word every day how he is. I pray God to grant you the years of Methuselah."

Catherine's relations to the Duchess were very intimate. Their friendship dated back forty-six years, and for a long while Catherine had signed many of her notes by a special sign whose meaning none but they knew. The remarkable age of the Duchess was evidently very green and vigorous,

[1] Letts. VII, 70.
[2] Letts. VII, 27.

for Catherine wrote again: "I hope God will keep you alive until the age of seven score and that we can sup together in the Tuileries without a bonnet." The same year the King wrote to her: "My beautiful lady, I will not say either young or old, because one is in doubt about your age, but so sure about your beauty as to think you must be only fifteen." Indeed at this time the Duchess seems to have been a friend of all the family, for the King's sister Margaret, who hated him so cordially, addressed a letter to her as "My Sybil." [1]

From Provence Catherine went to Dauphiny, writing to the Duchess as she started: "I have great fear of finding the proverb true, 'The poison is in the tail,' but I put my hopes in God." [2] Her fears rather than her hopes came true.

Lesdiguières, the leader of the Huguenots of Dauphiny, had never accepted the agreement of Nérac and refused to disarm or surrender the cities which he held. He wrote Catherine a polite letter assuring her of his faithfulness to the King and his desire to keep the peace if only his adversaries would let him and sent her deputations of gentlemen. But he was crafty beyond his years and she never could draw him to a conference; although she spent more than two months at Grenoble vainly trying to do so. In consequence she thought it "the most vexatious country in which she'd ever set foot; every day it's cold, hot, rainy, bad weather and hail. The brains of the people are like their weather." On the other hand she had found the climate of Guienne agreeable and wrote, "I think the air is good for colds, because I have not been for many years so well in winter as I have been this winter." She noticed with pleased surprise the early spring. "There is no more hawking, because the season is so far advanced. Already the beans are in flower, the almonds are hardened and the

[1] Letts. VI, 320, 338; VII, 58, 68, 130, etc., 134, 276, 367; B. N. fds. fr. 3381 f. 37; Lauzun, 124.
[2] Letts. VI, 381.

cherries big." In spite of the hard climate and the hard heads of the Dauphinois, she succeeded in patching up some sort of a peace and recorded it in an agreement signed by the representatives of the three estates and published throughout the province.

She had other things to settle besides the affairs of the province itself. Lesdiguières was one of many engaged in an intrigue which caused Catherine and her son a great deal of anxiety. The Siegneur de Bellegarde had been a great favorite of Henry III, who had taken him to Poland and, on his return to France, created him a marshal and granted him a large income. For some unknown reason he fell from favor, withdrew from court and formed the plan of making himself a semi-independent prince on the border between France, Savoy and Italy. In 1574, when Henry III returned from Poland, he had insisted upon carrying out his promise to the Duke of Savoy to present him with the two fortresses, Pignerol and Savillan, which France held in Piedmont. In consequence the Duke of Nevers resigned the governorship of the Marquisate of Saluces, which was a remnant of the French conquest in north Italy, and Bellegarde had been appointed. Governorships of provinces were held to be almost a personal possession and, when the Marshal fell into disgrace, the King, who wanted to get rid of him, induced him to resign the governorship of the marquisate in order to become governor of Lower Languedoc. But the bargain broke down over certain legal difficulties, as it had been foreseen by the King that it would, leaving the marquisate of Saluces in the hands of Charles Birague, the brother of the Chancellor, and the Marshal Bellegarde without any government. He quietly levied men among the Huguenots of the mountain valleys and agreed to give Lesdiguières, the Huguenot chief in Dauphiny, twenty thousand écus and possession of certain border towns of the marquisate in exchange for twelve hundred troops and six cannon. With this force he invaded Saluces. Birague was unable to defend the citadel for lack of provisions and in

June, 1579, the whole marquisate fell into the hands of Bellegarde.[1]

When news of these events reached Paris, the King was much enraged. He immediately suspected that the movement was backed by Spain and Savoy and information came to him which confirmed his suspicion. The general opinion of the council supported the inclination of the King to drive Bellegarde out of his conquests by force. The King made a list of Paris merchants from whom he might borrow, prepared to raise money in Lyons at twelve per cent interest and to send two hundred thousand francs worth of crown jewels to pawn among the princes of Italy. He tried to borrow through the Venetian Ambassador, pointing out that the King of Spain, who was behind this plot, threatened to become "arbiter and moderator of all Christendom." When Catherine heard of Bellegarde's conduct she wrote at once to her son that there was evidently something behind it and that no action ought to be taken until "they could see more clearly." It seemed to her impossible to settle the difficulty by force, because there was not a penny in the treasury of Dauphiny or Provence, the little money at Lyons would not go very far, and, as soon as the expedition got across the Alps, Navarre and the Huguenots would probably rise in arms. She was perfectly well aware of the connection between the Huguenots and Bellegarde. Indeed, shortly afterwards she wrote to the King that Lesdiguières had sent oxen across the mountains to bring back the cannon he had loaned for the expedition. The King listened to her advice,[2] and his view of the situation is expressed in a note to his favorite secretary, Villeroy:

"In regard to the Queen my mother, I believe the word she sends from Dauphiny. . . . And I don't see anything particular to answer except that she should herself do what is necessary to reëstablish order. It is plain that Lesdiguières tells everything

[1] De Thou, V, p. 607.

[2] Arch. Vat., 6, 22 May, 28 July, 3 Sept., 8 Oct., 1578; B. N. It. 1731 f. 95, 97, 107; Letts. VII, 38, 65.

very differently from the facts, as also is the case with the Marshal Bellegarde, who is a liar like the others, and, if I dared to say so, the Duke of Savoy is trying to put us to sleep, if we are willing to go to sleep. In short, all the words and letters of one and the other are nothing but dreams and lies and it takes a very clever man to guard himself against them." [1]

Catherine hoped to induce Bellegarde to make some sort of submission and in order to help this project she sent the King further advice in regard to a point in his foreign policy. The King had recently heard that the Duke of Savoy was assembling an army for the purpose of attacking Geneva. He therefore sent an envoy to him to persuade him to give up the plan and made a league to protect the city. It was a terrible scandal to the Pope, who wrote to the Nuncio to prevent the King from protecting that "refuge of the greatest scoundrels of the world—that sewer of all filth." The King, however, persisted in his intention and the Nuncio reported that his reason for doing so was his disgust with the Duke of Savoy. When Catherine heard of this, she was very much annoyed because of the effect it might have on the Duke, who was visiting her at Grenoble and urging Marshal Bellegarde to come to see her. She suggested to the Duke that there was a clause in the new league to defend Geneva to the effect that it was without prejudice to his rights, and, when she forwarded to the King his formal protest against it, she added a postscript in her own hand, begging him to answer at once, that the league had no reference to the Duke of Savoy. Of course she knew it was explicitly directed against him, but she wrote in explanation of her use of the falsehood, "it is necessary to use him in arranging this affair of Saluces." It is characteristic of the hand-to-mouth method of Catherine's diplomacy and the way in which the immediate object always seemed to her of the highest importance, that she subsequently wrote to her son that she had never approved of the agreement to protect Geneva, but had

[1] Pntd. Letts. VII, 77.

accepted it only because he had written about it in such a tone that she had not dared to express her opinion to the contrary. As a matter of fact, the Swiss alliance and the protection of Geneva had been a part of the classic diplomatic policy of France ever since the days of Francis I and Catherine herself had strained every nerve to maintain it, when it was threatened.[1]

The Duke of Savoy found himself obliged to yield to facts and the right words were found to soothe his injured feelings. He arranged a meeting with Bellegarde in one of the border towns of Savoy, where he welcomed Catherine and her entire suite with the most princely magnificence. Catherine had an interview with the Marshal in her bedroom, pointed to the picture of her son the King hanging against the tapestry and said: "Behold the King your master, to whose service I gave you and who has so much loved and honored you." The Marshal looked at it with tears in his eyes and assured her that he had no secret intelligence with Spain. Catherine did not believe this assurance and a few months later distorted the facts to suit her belief and told a Spanish envoy that Bellegarde had confessed to her the receipt of large sums from Spain. It was agreed that, in the presence of all the royal council accompanying Catherine, Bellegarde should on his knees beg pardon of her and the King for the fault which he had committed and formally surrender the Marquisate of Saluces into her hands. This was done, Catherine then gave him a royal commission as governor of the Marquisate, and the Marshal returned to Saluces. When he died before the end of the year, there was the usual reckless gossip about poison, which always arose in the sixteenth century about every opportune death, but it was not generally believed. De Thou, who wrote of Bellegarde from knowledge gained from one of the Marshal's confidants, said his death was the result of debauchery and certainly he cannot be suspected

[1] Girard (Secretary to Envoy), I, 38; Arch. Vat. Fr. I, B. 11, f. 61; ib. Dandino, 21 June, 1579; B. N. It. 1731 f. 117; Letts. 82, 83, 171, 172.

of any prejudice in favor of Catherine. The modern legend that she gave Bellegarde a slow poison, is without a shadow of proof and its acceptance by competent historians is another illustration of the disturbing influence of her bad reputation upon the judgment of many of those who have written of her life.[1]

By the middle of November, 1579, Catherine was back at court after an absence of sixteen months filled with exhausting voyages and tiresome negotiations. It seemed to a skilled observer who described her at this time that

"She enjoys work and grows young on it, whence comes the saying: 'If the Queen Mother goes, who stays here and if she stays here, who goes?' She is very stout but has a fine presence and a strong upstanding figure. She is always on the move, which gives her a most excellent appetite and, as she takes exercise enough for two, she eats in proportion, which sometimes brings on indigestion and dangerous illness. . . . She is very proud of the fact that she never lets any one leave her presence dissatisfied—at least so far as words go; of which she is very liberal. She spends a great deal of money in building palaces and libraries in order to leave an eternal memory of herself in the world. She is very religious, as can be seen not only by her good works like building churches, etc., but by the example of her Catholic life, which makes her most merciful to everyone, she is also so patient that no man remembers seeing her seriously angry and she forgives easily wrongs done to her. But she trusts very few people, because, in the past, she has been cheated by many. . . . There is no better way to gain her favor than by intimating in the course of conversation, that one recognizes that everything good in the state is the result of her wise counsel and that the blame for everything evil ought to be given to bad public servants." [2]

No sooner was Catherine back at court than she felt obliged to start again on one of the never-ending series of her journeys of reconciliation. There was reason to fear that the Duke of Anjou might put himself at the head of some of the many groups muttering discontent and Catherine sent word

[1] Letts. VII, 171, 172, 175.
[2] Rel. App., 60.

she was coming to see him to bring him back with her to court. After vainly trying to stop her from coming by various excuses, he finally received her, and, though he refused to come back, wrote at the bottom of one of her letters to the King that he "would not do or plan anything to his prejudice." Soon after he even came to court for a brief visit. This did not quiet Catherine's fears. She wrote from Champagne: "Things are in a worse condition than they are thought to be and I beg you to control your finances very carefully to raise a fund for your service without robbing your people, for you are on the brink of a general revolt and whoever tells you otherwise does not tell you the truth." [1]

[1] B. N. It. 1731 f. 251, 261; A. N. K. 1555 f. 91; Letts. VII, 202.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

MATCHMAKING AGAIN. THE SALCEDE PLOT

Catherine's view of the danger to her son's authority was not exaggerated. Since the previous spring a very menacing movement had been spreading in the three wealthy provinces of Burgundy, Normandy and Brittany, which was applauded and might be imitated in the other northern provinces. The Estates of these three provinces had solemnly refused to pay the new taxes and demanded the reconvocation of the Estates General. This was not a Huguenot movement, but the Huguenots were stirring. The Prince of Condé went through Paris secretly and seized the strong fortress of La Fère in Picardy and word came from the south that the King of Navarre had quarreled with the King's representative, Marshal Biron, and refused to surrender the cautionary cities according to the agreement of Nérac. The indefatigable reconciler started at once to see Condé to induce him to retire from the city he had seized, which lay on the path of any mercenaries coming from Germany, but she could make no impression on him. He assured her of his loyalty to the King and said he had only occupied the city to compel his enemies to acknowledge his royal appointment as governor of Picardy, which members of the League refused to do. She did succeed, at least, in gaining time, and five months later Condé suddenly withdrew to Germany.[1]

The attitude of the Huguenots of the south turned out to be more serious and in the spring it led to the war nicknamed "The Lovers War" from the mistaken idea that it was stirred up by Margaret of Valois out of revenge for

[1] B. N. It. 1731 f. 23, 77, 162, 215, 243, 258, 266; A. N. K. 1555 f. 29, 80; Arch. Vat. Dandino, 1 Oct., 1579; Letts. VII, 107, 202 n., 212 n.

the suggestion, made to her husband by her brother the King, that she was unfaithful to him. As a matter of fact, Margaret did all she could to keep the peace. The name has nothing in its favor except its picturesqueness and a certain strain of general truth as applied to Henry of Navarre and many of his young comrades, who, to use the phrase of one of them, "fought under the banner of Mars and Venus." A Huguenot captain of Henry of Navarre, who wore on his left wrist a bracelet of his lady love's hair, tells how, in a desperate fight, the bracelet was set on fire by the discharge of an harquebus and he shifted his sword to his left hand in order to use his right in putting out the flame to save his love token. The Catholic captain who was fencing with him dropped his point and drew a cross on the sand.[1]

Catherine was much alarmed over this rising and thought there was something behind it besides questions connected with the Edict of Pacification. She was afraid that the union of the Huguenots with the communes of Dauphiny portended some revolutionary demands for the reorganization or control of the state. The outcome showed she was unduly alarmed. The King took great precautions, both to defend threatened towns and to assure peaceable Huguenots of his protection. Two thirds of the party in the south did not rise at the call of Henry of Navarre and nearly all the sixty surprises of towns attempted by his partisans failed. The Duke of Anjou had been named toward the end of spring Lieutenant General and he was entrusted by his brother with the task of making a new treaty with the Huguenots. Henry of Navarre had no success in the field except the brilliant capture of Cahors, which gave the first sign of his great skill as a leader of fighting men—for hitherto he had been considered a somewhat soft and dissolute boy. In September the Venetian Ambassador wrote: "From the Loire to Paris the Huguenots hold only one little castle," and the treaty of Fleix in

[1] Lauzun 131; Sully, 29, 31.

November, 1580, closed, on very much the same terms as those established at Bergerac and Nérac, seven months of feebly waged and inconclusive civil war confined to a few provinces of the Kingdom.[1]

Catherine had long been very impatient for peace because Brittany, Normandy, Picardy, Champagne (for other than Huguenot reasons) were "every hour ready to take arms." Anjou had been anxious for peace in order "to make war outside the house." The Estates General of the revolted Netherlands had offered to make him Prince and Seigneur "with succession to his male heirs on condition that he would summon the Estates General once a year, put no foreigners on the Council of State, leave the religion of each province unchanged and obtain the aid of the King of France to maintain their liberties against the King of Spain or other enemies." In September, 1580, he had accepted the offer and four months later sent to the Estates a written promise from his brother "to aid him with all his power and league himself with the Netherlands as soon as they shall have effectively received you as their Prince and Lord." It is not hard to see that Anjou had practically forced this promise from his mother and brother through their fear of what he might do in France if he was not given a chance to seek his fortune outside of France. At the end of the year he had publicly announced that he would march to relieve Cambray, besieged by the Spaniards, and demanded men and money from the King for the expedition. Catherine sent him a long letter of remonstrance, whose style shows she did not write it herself, pointing out that the state of the finances forbade war with Spain, that she was not sure of the attitude of England and Germany, that Spain had many friends in France and that his action might provoke a new civil war from the Catholic side.[2]

In the midst of these troubles, Catherine suddenly had

[1] Letts. VII, 246, 249, 261; Herelle, pntd. I, 123, 124, 128, 129; Arch. Vat. 10 June, 1580; B. N. It. 1731 f. 351, 458.

[2] Letts. VII, 293, 304; Cal. F. 1580, p. 278; B. N. It. 1731 f. 362; Müller, 3, pp. 395, 661.

a new quarrel to appease. The Duke of Montpensier told the Duke of Anjou that, when he fled from court, the Duke of Nevers had offered to the King to bring him back dead or alive. This was reported to Nevers, who immediately said Montpensier was a liar, and there was talk of a duel between them. Catherine was afraid of something more serious—that Montpensier would go over to the Associated Catholics and join the party of his cousin, Henry of Navarre. That there was some truth in the charge seems probable when one remembers Catherine's own first plan to kidnap her troublesome younger son. But she wrote a shrewd letter to Anjou pointing out that Marshal Cossé (who was supposed to have been in this plot) was not his equal by birth or position and urging him to ignore the whole matter and thus show that he was as clever as those who were behind this game to hurt his reputation by continually using him as a tool to stir up trouble. She begged him to break away from the advice of "false friends who are trying to rob you of the good future God had put into your hands" and finally succeeded in patching up some sort of an outward reconciliation by finding a formula of explanation which all were willing to accept.[1]

In spite of his mother's remonstrances, Anjou persisted in his intention of marching from France to relieve Cambray. On the surface, the King pretended to be opposed to his brother's action and gave orders that all soldiers assembled without his direct warrant should be cut to pieces by the local authorities. But these orders were never carried out, and it soon became evident, even to outsiders, that he supported the expedition. Marshal Cossé was all but openly in command and, at the beginning of August, Spanish spies reported 14,000 infantry, four or five thousand horse and twelve field pieces mustered at the border. The Prince of Parma, the Spanish commander, could not meet the invasion and, on the 19th of August, 1581, Anjou announced to

[1] Cal. F. 1580, pp. 255, 257, 258; B. N. It. 1731 f. 346; Letts. VII, 313, 321, 372, Comp. 352, 355, 362.

the Estates General his entry into Cambray. This indirect support by the King of an attack on Spain was undoubtedly approved by the great majority of the royal council of all shades of opinion. There were even at court many nobles, not Huguenots, who wanted open war on Spain because they believed she had helped the Huguenots to rebel, and the Venetian Ambassador reported that the general opinion was that "the greatness and crafty plans of Spain must be opposed." [1]

For more than two years the relations of Spain and France had been embroiled by another question, which was now acute—the succession to the throne of Portugal. The young and chivalrous King Sebastian, invading north Africa, had fallen in battle with the Moors in August, 1578. He was succeeded by his grand-uncle, the Cardinal Henry, then sixty years old. There were a large number of pretendants to the succession: five descendants of younger brothers or sisters of Henry, a Portuguese prince and princess and three foreign sovereigns, the Prince of Parma, the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy. In addition two ecclesiastics claimed a voice in giving the crown, the Abbé of Clairvaux, because Portugal was an ancient part of the Abbey domains, and Pope Gregory XIII because the kingdom was a fief of the papacy. The list was completed by two other foreigners who claimed prior descent from more ancient kings, Queen Elizabeth and Catherine de Médicis. A year after his accession King Henry determined to cite all pretendants before judges named by the Cortes to settle who was the heir. The claims of the Duke of Savoy, the Prince of Parma and the King of Spain were declared invalid by the law of Lamego because their ancestress had married a foreign sovereign, the claims of the other four foreign claimants were fantastic and the legal choice lay between Antonio, Prior of Cato, a nephew of King Henry of Portugal, and Catherine of Braganza, a niece. But before

[1] Arch. Vat., 14 May, 1581; B. N. It. 1732 f. 10, 47, 100; Müller, IV, 32, 101, 150, 163; Letts. VII, 375, 378.

the question was settled, King Henry died in January, 1580. It was evident that Philip II of Spain would not abandon his claim and it was feared that he would assert it by force of arms.

Catherine's claim went back on the distaff side to Alfonso III, a Portuguese king of the middle of the thirteenth century and, besides the lapse of years, the genealogical line showed gaps and difficulties, but she was strongly disposed to insist upon it and secretly appealed to the Pope not to invest Philip II with the crown. The Spanish Ambassador said it was because "she wanted word to get abroad that she had kings for ancestors." But there were other reasons for her activity in having "all the archives in the kingdom searched and in looking up old chronicles and papers." It was thought well to have a counterclaim to back, if necessary, against Philip, because it was feared that adding to his own wealth what was brought by the Portuguese ships from the Indies, he might become "a menace to all Christendom." The fears of the French were realized. Within five months of the death of King Henry, the Duke of Alva led a large veteran army across the border of Portugal. Dom Antonio, who had assumed the crown at the invitation of the deputies of the Third Estate and a part of those of the Nobility, was driven from the kingdom and in the early winter of 1581 reached the French court after a visit to England to beg the help of Elizabeth.[1]

The King was not willing to make open war, but, just as he had been unwilling to let Cambray fall into Philip's hands, so he was unwilling to let the riches of the Portuguese Indies flow into Philip's coffers and he used the same tactics to avoid the open issue of Portugal he had used in the case of the Netherlands. Then he said the affair was his brother's, now he said it was his mother's and he could not stop her from supporting her rights. With this answer

[1] B. N. Dupuy, 444; Letts. VII, 110; A. N. K. 1555 f. 78, 108; It. 1731 f. 53, 1732 f. 214; Cal. F. 1581, p. 343.

Philip had to be content, though he knew that a naval armament was being fitted out to attack him.[1]

Catherine's favorite and cousin, Philip Strozzi, son of the Marshal, Captain General of French Infantry, was ordered to prepare to attack the Azores, the resting stations of the treasure fleets on their voyages from America. The American treasure fleets and the taxes of the Netherlands were the two great sources of Philip's wealth and the Venetian Ambassador in 1569 had spoken of the Netherlands as "the true mines, Indies and treasure house of Spain." Catherine felt that with her youngest son effectively supporting the rebellion of the Netherlands and her cousin in command of a French fleet making her pensioner Dom Antonio master of the road to America, she could bring Philip to terms. She did not openly avow this plan of bringing pressure to bear on the two most sensitive parts of Philip's vast domains. When the Spanish Ambassador remonstrated with her, she said that, in spite of the wrong done her by Spain's forcible entry into Portugal on which she had a claim, she was only letting the Portuguese raise some forces in France for self defense and she had done all she could to prevent Anjou from seizing Cambray. But as a matter of fact she was actively preparing on the coast of Normandy a naval expedition and the King wrote to the Governor of the province to express his hopes for its success.[2]

Her clear understanding of just what she was doing appears in two letters written at the beginning and the middle of this year (1581). In the first, she tells her son the King that open war with Spain would be the "ruin of his kingdom" because the poor people, already "so pillaged, could not bear the taxes." She cannot advise him to let his brother perish, to make war on Spain nor to provoke civil war in the realm. If he replies that he must choose one of

[1] A. N. K. 1559 f. 15, ib. passim for 1581.
[2] Rel. I, 3, p. 357; A. N. K. 1059 f. 18, 67, 87; Arch. Vat. 15 Sept., 1581; B. N. fds. fr. 3291 f. 122.

the three, she wants to show him a way to avoid them all. She is certain that "Spain has no more means for waging open war now than we have and, if Anjou can hold what he has in Flanders and we can hold the islands of Portugal, he won't begin war but he will be obliged to come to terms." What terms she wanted appears in her letter six months later to the French Ambassador in Madrid.

It was never possible for Catherine to disentangle the greatest events of Europe from her plans for marrying her children and it is doubtful whether she ever looked at any of them very long except under the aspect of a means to that end. The match she would have liked best to get for her youngest boy out of this international situation was not the match with the elusive Elizabeth, but a marriage to one of her grandchildren, his nieces, the infantas of Spain. Holding Spain in the nippers, with one jaw on the Azores and the other on the Netherlands, she hoped to force this match at last on reluctant Philip. She told the Spanish Ambassador "after dinner in my garden of my little house," that this marriage was the true way to make friendship between France and Spain. She repeated the old excuses and denials about the attack on the Netherlands and the fleet preparing against the Azores. She promised to oppose the English marriage if it was again urged, but, in her whole report of her own talk, one sees the subtle threat behind the conciliatory words, and she begs the French Ambassador at Madrid "if the King of Spain speaks to him of this marriage to do all he can to bring it about, but dextrously, so that it may always appear that the project comes from them." [1]

Philip was not frightened by Catherine's subtle threats, but Elizabeth, who understood the game Catherine was playing, and did not want a united France and Spain, thought it best to give suddenly such a gracious answer to her youthful wooer that it seemed a tardy veiled assent and in the middle of July, 1580, she wrote to the King: "I shall pray God for this Grace only that it may so crown

[1] Letts. VI, 399.

this work that you may never have cause to regret your opinion of me, nor Monsieur (Anjou) ever find reason to repent his choice. For my own part I firmly believe that my happiness will be only too great for an old woman to whom paternosters will suffice in place of nuptials." It would have been a great mistake to assume from all this that she had really made up her mind to marry Anjou. At the same time with this gracious note, a letter came to Catherine from the French Ambassador saying that, amid profuse assertions of affection for Anjou, Elizabeth was insisting that her people would not hear of the marriage, unless France would expressly promise to bear all the expense of defending the Netherlands against Spain.[1]

Catherine now changed her play and began to use this outward willingness of Elizabeth to marry Anjou as a lever against Spain. In this she got help from the Pope, who did not want the heir apparent of France to marry a heretic. Catherine also got the support of the Duke of Savoy, to whom she offered the hand of her favorite granddaughter, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Lorraine by Catherine's dead daughter, Claude. Therefore, in spite of the doubt of Elizabeth's sincerity suggested by the French Ambassador in London, doubt she probably fully shared, Catherine wrote to Madrid that although the English marriage was well advanced towards conclusion, she would be willing to do all she could to bring about the Spanish marriage, "which would settle the troubles of Flanders, Portugal and, indeed, of all Christendom." [2]

The dominant traits of the character of Henry III were by this time so developed that the strange mixture in his character was evident. The tendency to intense pious observances which had been so pronounced in his youth had grown upon him. The people attributed to his notable frequency in going to confession and mass, his success in

[1] Cal. F. 1580, p. 541; Castelnau, 692.

[2] Arch. Vat. 16 June, 12 July, 18 Sept., 1580; 2 Jan., 21 Feb., 1581; Letts. VII, 401.

curing scrofula by touching the afflicted, saying: "The King touches you, God heal you." All the Kings of France were supposed to possess this power, but the reputation of Henry III as a healer brought thousands of sick from distant lands, even Spain and Portugal. His devotion to religious exercises was evidently fitful and capricious. Catherine wrote to the Pope saying the doctors thought the Lenten fish diet was bad for his digestion, but she had vainly urged him to eat meat and she begged the Pope, without letting it be known he did it at her request, to order the King's confessor to make him eat meat by the threat of excommunication if he did not obey. The matter was referred to the Nuncio at Paris and ordinarily such a dispensation would not have been difficult to obtain. But the Huguenot controversies and civil wars had caused great stress to be laid on the regular Friday and Lenten fasts as signs of loyalty to the Church. Their violation was regarded with horror by the popular imagination. A few years before a loup-garou had been burnt on his own confession. He was undoubtedly a homicidal maniac who had killed four children under the delusion that he had diabolic power to change himself into a wolf. He was surprised just after he had killed a boy. The official account of his trial says: "He had killed the boy with intent to eat him, which he would have done unless people had come along, the said defendant being then in the form of a man and not of a wolf, in which human form he would have eaten the flesh of the said boy but for the arrival of the said help *notwithstanding the fact that it was Friday,* according to his own many times repeated confession." With the state of public feeling indicated by such a document as this, the Nuncio felt the request of Catherine ought not to be granted. He reported that the King had no need of dispensation from the Lenten rules "and, if he must break them, exhort him to eat meat secretly; otherwise he will greatly encourage the heretics, because he has not gone six times to church or sermon during Lent—which causes great scandal." Nor

was Henry angered by a little jesting about his own pious practices. He made no objection when a court ball given by the two queens was opened by a procession of their young ladies in waiting, walking two by two, dressed as flagellants with candles in their hands, "making show to whip themselves with ribbons of sundry silk instead of cord whips and singing some light verses." [1]

This strain of somewhat capricious piety which had not yet reached the pitch it later attained, was mingled with a tendency to debauchery which dated back also to his early youth. It seems to have been largely due to a bad reputation in this respect that there arose at this time a great scandal about his alleged love for a beautiful nun of Poissy, which spread widely through France and finally reached Rome. The Nuncio, after investigation, reported that this particular story was not true, but the King's weak health was thought by good authority to be largely due to his debauchery.[2]

He was exceedingly intelligent, well read and very eloquent in public speech, but there was a certain softness about him which made him shrink from the weight of public business. This tendency to weaken under the strain of continued attention to affairs, had been encouraged by flattering physicians, who told him long attention was bad for his health. He escaped from the labors and cares of administration not, as his brother Charles had done, by plunging into hunting and violent athletic exercises, but by retiring where troublesome duties and questions could not reach him. His favorite refuge was a house he had bought for the Queen at Olinville not far from Paris. He usually took with him some of his new favorites and others of his older intimates and lived in very strict retirement where all ceremony was laid aside and he was addressed as Monsieur d'Olinville. This soft strain in the King, which made him

[1] Rel. I, 4, p. 425; Charles II of England "touched" 100,000 people; Letts. VII, 227; B. N. fds. fr. 3951 f. 60; Arch. Vat. 27 Mar., 1580; Cal. F. 1581, p. 69.

[2] A. N. K. 1558 f. 63; Arch. Vat., 4, 24 App. 17 July, 1580; Rel. App. 51.

shrink from "the exercises of a gentleman," gave offense to the nobles, so about this time he made a spasmodic attempt, probably at his mother's suggestion, to placate them by hunting, tilting and playing tennis. But it was only temporary and at the age of thirty this softness was evidently firmly fixed in his character. He had an almost womanly weakness for jewels and fine clothes which showed itself not only in the use of costly fabrics and magnificent colors, but in a love for certain bizarre exaggerations which suggested luxurious habits. Modern writers have, however, been mistaken in fixing upon his wearing of ear rings as a particular sign of a certain effeminate licentiousness. That was quite common in his own and succeeding generations and Charles I, the most correct in his personal habits of all English Kings, had himself painted two generations later with great pearls in his ears.[1]

The softness of the character of Henry III appeared most strikingly in his relation to his mignons. It was not a bad policy for the King to surround himself with swords on which he could depend or to raise to great offices of state able men who were not part of any of the factions of the nobility. But he was not able to carry it out with firmness and due moderation because of that weakness in his character which rendered him so excessively "ready to grant to his friends everything which they asked of him." More and more they absorbed his time, his favors and his money. They were only too apt to assume, as the best way of meeting the pride and scorn with which they were treated by the ancient nobility, a haughty insolence. Catherine while on her peace-making journey through the southern provinces had written praising the address of two of these young men whom the King had sent on missions to help her. But on her return she had again become afraid of their excessive influence and by making skilful use of her younger son's refusal to return to court while they were present, succeeded for a time in banishing them. They were soon

[1] Rel. App. 52; ib. I, 4, p. 424; Cal. F. 1581, pp. 168, 386, 343.

back again more powerful than ever and Catherine began a series of conflicts with them for the ear of her son. At least twice during 1581 she wept bitter tears over the situation, complaining that she saw her counsels were no longer acceptable to Henry and asking his leave to retire from court.[1]

One of these mignons, Bernard Nogaret, son of an important official in the armies during the civil wars, the King created, at the age of twenty-seven, Duke of Epernon and gave him ten great offices of state. Catherine, unable to check this rapid rise which made him within a few years the most powerful man in the kingdom, endeavored to make friends with him and mediate the deadly hostility which had arisen between him and the house of Guise—a hostility so great that the Duke d'Epernon had repeatedly asked permission of the King to fight a duel with the Duke of Guise. In the end of 1581 she wrote him a most flattering letter begging him to help her in getting for the mother of the Duke of Guise a vacant abbey she wanted for her son by her second marriage. She points out that it is a chance, not only to show his good will to her personally, but also to wipe out the past and become good friends with the Duchess.

"That is what I desire because I believe that it is for the service of the King that all quarrels should cease. You cannot do anything which is of greater advantage for us, than to gain friends and keep those you have, because we live in an age when everyone who has the honor of being loved by the King, should have friends in order to gain for him as many servitors as possible. Since you want to be my friend I will talk to you as a friend and I beg you to do this for me." [2]

The most pernicious result of this weakness of the King towards these young men he was raising to power to be the pillars of his throne, was the vast sums of money which he lavished upon them. A good example of this ruinous gen-

[1] Rel. App. 425; B. N. It. 1731 f. 280; Cal. F. 1580, p. 147, 1581, pp. 186, 300; A. N. K. 1558 f. 15; Arch. Vat. 3 Feb.
[2] Girard, 55; Letts. VII, 415.

erosity of Henry III was the marriage of Anne d'Arques (son of Marshal Joyeuse), whom Henry had created at the age of twenty Duke of Joyeuse and a peer of France. When he married him to a younger sister of the Queen, so elaborate were the preparations among the ladies and gentlemen of the court circles for the two weeks of festivities which followed the nuptials, that dress goods rose a third in price at Paris; especially cloth of silver and cloth of gold. The costumes of the King and of the bridegroom were exactly alike,

"so covered with embroidery, pearls and other precious stones that their value could not be estimated, and, at every one of the seventeen feasts which followed the marriage, all the lords and ladies came in costumes of which the larger part were of cloth of gold or of silver; enriched with laces, gimp and embroideries in gold and silver and with precious stones and pearls in great number and of great value. The expense of the masquerades, jousts, tourneys, musical performances, dances, etc., was so great that gossip said it had cost the King twelve hundred thousand écus and, in truth, the cloth of gold and of silver for everything, even to the masks and the chariots and the dresses of the pages and lackeys, the velvet and the gold embroidery and the silver embroidery, were no more spared than if they could have been had for the asking. And everybody was amazed at so great luxury and such an enormous and superfluous expense which was made by the King and by the others of his court by his express commandment, in a time which was not one of the best in the world, but very hard and severe for the people, eaten and gnawed to the bone, in the country, by the soldiers and, in the cities, by new taxes."

The Tuscan Ambassador estimated the total expense of the marriage and the gifts made to the young couple at "two million in gold."

But Catherine, that well known "friend of feast and festival," who, throughout all the financial distresses of the Kingdom spent money freely on new palaces, gardens and balls, justified this extravagance. She wrote to her ambassador in Venice expressing her regrets that the Turkish envoys had not been present to see the triumph and mag-

nificence of the marriage; by which they could have perceived plainly that France was not so sunk in poverty as some foreigners thought.[1]

It was a poor time for any expense not absolutely necessary, for, at the beginning of the year 1582, Catherine's mind was very much occupied with the armada to attack Spain in the south without declaring war. The Portuguese hated the Spaniards and when the shadow of Spanish conquest hung over them, their ambassador had said in Venice, "we would sooner become Frenchmen, Englishmen, yes, even Turks, than Spaniards." Nevertheless, when the invasion came, they had not been able to put up very much of a fight against the veteran Spanish troops, and there seemed little chance of making any impression on the power of Spain by landing troops in Portugal. The inhabitants of the Azores had written to Elizabeth in the end of 1581: "These islands are the key of all the navigation of Spain and those who hold it have no necessity to go to the Indies nor pass into the South Sea, so much so, that if this summer we had had only four English galleys here, we could have collected more than ten millions of gold:" Most of the Azores had held firm for Dom Antonio when Portugal was conquered and Catherine had twice sent them reinforcements to defend themselves against Spanish attack in the spring of 1581. The main expedition sailed in the middle of June, 1582, about sixty vessels, carrying beside the mariners five thousand men, under the command of Strozzi with sealed orders signed by the King and written partly in Catherine's own hand. The end of July he joined battle with the Spanish fleet in the waters of the Azores and met with a crushing defeat. Carried on board the flag ship of the Spanish Admiral a wounded prisoner, he was immediately thrown into the sea. The other prisoners, some four hundred in number, were kept four days and then condemned to death as pirates, because they had no commis-

[1] Cabie (2), 691; de l'Estoile, 2, p. 23; Neg. Tosc. IV, 402; Letts. VII, 404.

A BALL AT THE COURT UNDER HENRY III, AT THE MARRIAGE OF ANNE, DUKE OF JOYEUSE, AND MARGARET OF LORRAINE, SISTER OF THE QUEEN OF FRANCE

Catherine and Henry are seated at the left. From a painting of the French School of the 16th Century in the Louvre

sions from the King of France. Three hundred common sailors and soldiers were hung in bunches over the spars of the Spanish fleet, and eighty gentlemen were garroted on a scaffold erected on the shore.[1]

The news raised the strongest desire for vengeance in France and it was not safe for a Spaniard to show himself on the streets of Paris. The King and Catherine were as much angered by this cruelty as they had been by the affair of Florida and the King swore to avenge himself with the help of God. Catherine's mood was no less angry. She felt that if men would not execute her vengeance, God would do it himself. She dissimulated her anger, however, and wrote to her Ambassador at the Vatican that she had determined to leave vengeance to God; she could never have a wish or feeling stronger than to aid with all her power the union and repose of Christendom. But these Christian sentiments were only for the ears of the Pope and they did not prevent her from trying within six weeks to buy, in Sweden, Denmark or the Baltic ports, a fleet of twenty great vessels to be used against Spain. A year later, the King was still negotiating regarding the construction, arming and equipment of fifty vessels in Denmark. But they never could raise the money to get the new fleet and the second expedition, which sailed a year after the defeat of the first, was less than half as strong and could do nothing in the face of the superior Spanish force but surrender almost without a battle. (August, 1583.) [2]

About the time of the failure of the first expedition to the Azores an affair took place which caused great anxiety to the King and must have troubled his mother, although, because of her presence in Paris, it has left very slight traces in her letters. There was a French nobleman by the name of Nicolas de Salcède, son of a Spaniard killed in the massacre of St. Bartholomew and a French mother of noble

[1] Philippson ctd. (2), 89; Cal. F. 1581, p. 338; Rel. IV, 426. de la Roncière, 171; Letts. VIII, 28 n.; Leonardo Duron Lapie; Cal. F. 1581, p. 82; Letts., VIII, 381 to 405.

[2] Letts. VIII, 62, 65, 71, 150, 407, Arch. C. 60, 70; Arch. Vat. 25 Sept.

family. Possessed of a small estate, he desired to enlarge his income and became a maker of false money. Accused of the crime, he fled and was condemned in absence by the court of Rouen to be boiled alive; which was the legal punishment for coiners. The Duke of Lorraine, to whose house Salcède's mother had been related by marriage, obtained his pardon from the King and he entered into the service of the Duke of Anjou, from whom he obtained permission to raise a regiment for the expedition against the Netherlands. But the suspicions of the Prince of Orange were aroused and he suddenly ordered the arrest of Salcède and two of his friends. One of the accused escaped, another committed suicide in prison, but Salcède made a long confession of conspiracy in France which caused the Duke of Anjou to send word to the King that he had discovered a very great danger to the state. His report was confirmed by a trusted envoy of Catherine's and Salcède was brought to Paris. He repeated his confession and accused the entire family of Guise, the Duke of Nevers and many others of the chief nobles of the country of a conspiracy to put France into the hands of Spain.[1]

He repeated his confession in a different form in the presence of Catherine, the King and some of the chief counsellors of state. The King was very much troubled and the councillor of Parlement who had charge of the trial has recorded that, one day after the King had been talking with him of the affair, he turned to the window of his room in the Louvre and looking down into the courtyard filled with the nobility stood for a long time in troubled thought. Then turning he said, "Maitre Angenoust, you see all those people there—tell me who among them all I can trust?" After Salcède had been condemned to death with the usual addition, that he should be put to the torture in order to obtain from him all the truth, Angenoust went to the palace at four o'clock in the morning. With the help of a friend of his he got admission to the bedside of the King and sug-

[1] De Thou, VI, 188 n.; Arch. C., X, 143.

gested to him that he ought to be present in the torture chamber where he had arranged some tapestries so skilfully that nobody would suspect his presence. The King asked him if any of his predecessors had ever done anything of the sort. "No," replied Angenoust, "those who have found themselves in a similar situation haven't taken pains enough to discover the truth of the wicked plots against their persons and have suffered for it." The King instantly had himself dressed and went with the councillor. Both before and after torture, the accused persisted in his confession incriminating a large number of the nobles of France. In the afternoon the King and Catherine, accompanied by the Princess of Lorraine, Catherine's granddaughter, went to a room in the city hall overlooking the square in which Salcède was torn to pieces by four horses, in the presence of a huge crowd, which covered the square, the roofs of all the houses and a swarm of boats in the river. The King did not go to the window, which was shielded by a curtain, but the young Princess of Lorraine watched the scene and reported to him what went on.[1]

Catherine had evidently made up her mind before Salcède arrived at Paris that his confession was false. Although the King was very much staggered by it he determined to treat it as false and ordered all the papers brought to his cabinet and burnt. He told one of his intimate counselors that having heard Salcède talk on the rack, he would never again accept evidence gotten by torture. But although the details of the confession do not inspire confidence, events soon showed that the ground was mined beneath the King's feet in a way not unlike that which Salcède described.[2]

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 3958 f. 188; Arch. C. X, 154; Salcèdes deposition Comp.; A. N. K. 1560 f. 82, 87, 97; Arch. Vat. 30 Aug., 6 Nov.; B. N. It. 1732, pp. 380, 395, 400.

[2] Letts, VIII, 51; Neg. Tosc. IV, 655; Villeroy, 104; Angenoust's "Relation."

CHAPTER XXXIX

HER CHILDREN'S FOLLY. THE MIGNONS

The year 1583, the sixty-fifth of Catherine's age, was a hard one for her. Her vigorous health was impaired. For some time she had been complaining that she could not enjoy as she used to her favorite exercise of walking in the open air and in addition to her usual digestive troubles, which came from her large appetite, she suffered severely from sciatica, gout, headache and colic. The doctors assured her that gout, in spite of its discomfort, had a tendency to prolong life, but this comforting assurance was doubtless balanced by the deductions of one of those astrologers against whose influence her skeptical intelligence could never defend her. He told her that the stars suggested that this might be the last year of her life. This bodily weakness probably made it the harder for her to bear up against the trouble which came to her during this year in connection with every one of her three surviving children.[1]

The first of these troubles was in connection with her youngest child, the Duke of Anjou. In the previous year she had finally made up her mind that Elizabeth had no real intention of ever marrying him. During the time at the beginning of the year when her son was being magnificently entertained at the English court, and Elizabeth was acting as if she intended to marry him, Catherine said to the Venetian Ambassador: " 'I will tell you confidentially what I wouldn't say to any one else. The Queen of England is a very astute person and always manages to look after her own interest. She got hold of my son, who is young and won't listen to my advice, and it seems to me that those

[1] *Lettr.* VIII, 48, 151; Cal. F. 1583, pp. 72, 712.

books which are written about the enchanted islands, as if it were something fabulous, are true and not fabulous at all.' I answered, 'You mean those books about Amadis and the enchanted islands.' She burst into loud laughter with the greatest glee and answered that I had hit the nail on the head." [1]

Catherine was the more anxious, therefore, that Anjou should make a success in his new office of Duke of Brabant, into which he was solemnly inaugurated at Antwerp in February, 1582. William of Orange placed the ducal mantle over his shoulders and Catherine, always solicitous about the ceremonial side of life, wrote grateful letters to Orange and his wife. She was now both anxious to help her younger son all she could and fearful of the transference of his restless ambition to France if his Duchy broke down. She therefore urged the King to declare war on Spain. When the Vatican began to use its utmost influence to prevent a break between the "Most Catholic" and the "Most Christian" Kings, Catherine was quick to turn the new situation to her youngest boy's advantage. She went back to her old proposal and pointed out, both to the envoy of the Pope and to the Spanish Ambassador, that an easy way to heal all troubles was to marry one of the infantas to the Duke of Anjou and give her the Netherlands for a dot. The King was very averse to war, but the slaughter of prisoners in the Azores strengthened her hands and those who cared nothing about Anjou now joined her in urging war lest Spain should become strong enough "to give law to the rest of Christendom." In spite of all this support Catherine could not persuade the King to take up his brother's cause in arms openly, and was obliged to content herself with sending him money from her own purse and seeing great numbers of French nobles flock to his standard.[2]

But Anjou was entirely lacking in administrative capac-

[1] B. N. It. 1732 f. 250; Letts. VIII, 41, 44, 48, 64, 75, 83, 88, 130.
[2] B. N. It. 1732 f. 293, 424, 429; A. N. K. 1560 f. 15, 60, 69, 75, 109; Arch. Vat. 12, 20 Nov., 12 Jan., 1582.

ity. His court was filled with a crowd of greedy and supercilious young men anxious to make their fortunes from his favor and the skilful counsellors and soldiers assigned secretly by the King to help him could not induce him to show wisdom in government or maintain discipline among his troops. The secret levies made in France to be sent to his aid under the command of the Duke of Montpensier, got entirely out of hand. Catherine, who was paying for their equipment, wrote that they were guilty of "pillage and cruelties so execrable that the mere story of them filled her with horror," and urged Montpensier to get them across the border as soon as possible. Anjou blamed his ill-success on the people he came to govern and chafed under the restrictions placed upon his power by the constitutional liberties he had taken an oath to respect. He planned therefore to overthrow them by seizing a number of the Netherland cities. On the 17th of January, a considerable body of French soldiers asked leave to march through the city of Bruges. When they were in the center of it they suddenly halted and called out, "Let all Catholics take arms and help us against the Protestants." But the burghers, Catholics and Protestants alike, ran to arms in such numbers and blocked the streets so completely, that the soldiers thought it wise to surrender and were allowed to march out of the gates. Their captain said he acted under orders to seize the city in order to restore the Catholic religion and that similar orders had been issued for all cities where there were any French troops. In most of the important cities where it was tried the treacherous attempt met with similar ill-success. In Antwerp fifteen hundred soldiers were reported killed in the streets by the burghers, and it is little to be wondered at that the people generally cried out against the French and called them traitors and murderers.[1]

When Catherine heard of this blundering treachery, she was filled with grief and chagrin, which, at first, was in-

[1] Letts. VIII, 62, B. N. Béthune 8823; Cal. F. 1583, pp. 20, 24, 53; Eng. Hist. Rev., II, 75.

creased by her fear that her son himself might have been killed or taken prisoner. Later she was inclined to take the ground that it had been an insult to her son and a slaughter of his followers due to the "ingratitude" of the Prince of Orange. She seems, however, to have become aware that this attitude could not be maintained and that the affair was bound to produce a sinister impression. All hope of removing the bad impression which the weakly planned and weakly executed piece of treachery made upon everyone was destroyed by the evidence of the Duke of Brabant himself. His manifestly false explanation made even a loyal Frenchman like Bodin, who was with him, wonder why "he did not find some honorable excuse for so dishonorable an adventure . . . which makes me redden with shame." The provinces were anxious to patch up the affair in some way so that they might not lose such irregular support as France had been giving them, but it was evident that, after such an attempt, they could not for their own safety grant the Duke more, but rather less, authority than he had previously exercised. The negotiations dragged along very hopelessly and finally Anjou left the Netherlands and returned to France, where he lived as quietly as possible.[1]

The Netherlands had been perfectly right to distrust him thoroughly, for in addition to his attempt to seize their cities in violation of his ducal oath, he had carried on negotiations with the Prince of Parma, the commander of the Spanish army and Governor of the revolted provinces, and had seriously considered the proposition of surrendering to him two chief points in the military defense of the Netherlands, in exchange for mastery of Brussels. When he wrote to consult his mother about this treachery, she did not express any definite opinion although she was evidently somewhat afraid of the result of such a bargain, but wrote him that, in whatever situation he might find himself, his first care must be for his dignity, honor,

[1] B. N. It. 1732 f. 463; A. N. K. 1561 f. 24, 27; Letts. VIII, 84, 86, 100; Cal. F. 1583, p. 85.

reputation and safety. She evidently felt afraid to oppose him too much, because she knew that messengers had been sent him from the Duke of Montmorency (Damville, head of the Politiques of Languedoc, who had succeeded to his brother's title). But she did what she could for her discredited son, trying to revive the project of the marriage with one of the infantas, by threatening renewed military action in the Netherlands with the aid of the German princes. She could not do much for him and Anjou proved as difficult to handle as ever; even entering into negotiations with the Spaniards for the surrender of Cambray for a huge sum of money, a plan of which Catherine wrote "the mere rumor of it brings to me and all France so much shame and infamy that I almost die of displeasure and dislike even to think of it." [1]

Before her trouble over her younger son had reached this stage, another trouble had come to her about her daughter. Eighteen months before this Catherine had exhausted every possible effort to get the King of Navarre to come to court with his wife, but the opposition of his followers who feared danger to him or their cause, was too strong to permit him to accept. He had finally agreed to let his wife pay a visit to her mother, from whom she had been separated five or six years, provided her brother would pay the expenses of the journey, and he was persuaded in addition to go half way with her to have an interview with his mother-in-law on the difficulties which were arising in the enforcing of the Edict of Beaulieu, as interpreted by the subsequent peaces of Nérac and Fleix. Escorted by a brilliant train of five hundred Huguenot cavaliers, he met Catherine at the little village of La Mothe St. Heraye at the end of March, 1582. The conference lasted for three days and all the complaints of the Huguenots were carefully discussed: the fact that neither Henry of Navarre nor Condé could exercise any authority in the provinces for which they held royal commissions as governors; Henry's failure to receive the annual

[1] Letts. VIII, 94, 119, 132, 140, 157, Busbecq.

pension which his father and grandfather had received from the treasury in recompense for the seizure of a large part of the kingdom of Navarre by Spain; the failure to provide tribunals of justice that seemed to the Huguenots sufficiently impartial; the desire of the Huguenots to keep the cities of surety longer than the six years at whose end they had agreed to surrender them. Though none of these questions were definitely settled, Catherine did succeed in conciliating the mind of her son-in-law and seems to have almost persuaded him to accompany his wife to court. The decision not to go she attributed to the influence of the gentlemen of his suite; therefore when they took leave of her she received them with a cold and haughty gravity and being asked if she had any last words to say to them, replied, "What I have to say to you is that you are the cause of the ruin of my son your master, the ruin of the King of Navarre, and your own ruin at the same time." [1]

Henry of Navarre then made his way to the south, while his wife and her mother went slowly to Paris, where they had arrived in the end of April, 1582. From the court Margaret wrote her husband a letter urging him very strongly to come and join her. "I beg you very humbly to take this advice from that person in all the world who loves you the most and has the strongest desire for your advantage." This and other humble and friendly letters to Henry from his wife received an exceedingly brutal reply, which drew Catherine into this family quarrel. The King of Navarre, as we learn from his wife's journals, supplemented by other gossip, had been, during the last three years, successively in love with three young women; the first was a waiting maid of his mother-in-law whom he met during the conference at Nérac, the second two were ladies in waiting of Margaret. This was so much a matter of course, that it does not seem to have troubled Margaret very much, because she found her life at the little court at Nérac, where they had "every sort of honest pleasure and a

[1] Sauzé based on Mss. journal of witness.

ball ordinarily every afternoon and evening, so agreeable and so beautiful that she had no desire to return to the court of France." Her complaisance went so far that, when Mademoiselle de Fosseuse became pregnant, she did her best to help the King to conceal the birth of the child. It was not concealed, however, and when Margaret arrived at Paris bringing Mademoiselle Fosseuse with her, she found that the whole affair was public knowledge in the capital. Therefore, by the advice of Catherine, the young woman was sent to her home. Although Henry of Navarre had told his wife when he parted from her that he never expected to see his mistress again, he was furious when he got this news and sent a special messenger to Paris to deliver a most insulting message to his wife. He bade her, in order to shut the mouth of the King, the Queen or anybody else who should talk to her about it, say that he loved the young woman and that she loved her for that reason. She replied in a letter which is a model of affectionate dignity, "If I had been born in a condition of life unworthy of the honor of being your wife, such an answer as that would not be a bad one for me to make, but being what I am it would be too unbecoming in me and therefore I will take good care not to make it." [1]

Catherine's reply to this brutality of her son-in-law begins indignantly but ends affectionately.

"My Son:

"I was never so astonished as to hear the language which Frontenac has repeated to many people as the message which he had carried, by your commandment, to your wife. It is something which I would not have believed if, when I asked him, he had not told me himself that it was true. . . . You are not the first young husband who hasn't been very wise in affairs of this sort, but I am sure that you are the first and the only one who, after such a thing had happened, could use such language to his wife. . . . She is the sister of your King, who helps you more than you think, who loves and honors you as much as if she had had the honor to marry in you a son of France, she being a

[1] Margaret, 163, 285, 289; Letts. VIII, 36.

subject. That's not the way to treat women of such a house as hers; to scold them publicly at the wish of a common courtesan [1] —for all the world, not only all France, knows about the child she has borne—and to send her such a message by a little gentleman showing his impudence by accepting such a commandment from his master!—But no, I cannot believe that the message came from you, because you are too well born not to know how to get on with the daughter of your King and the sister of him who commands this entire realm and you. Besides that she loves you and honors you as a good woman ought to and if I thought differently I wouldn't support her nor send anything to make you recognize the wrong you have done to yourself, for she couldn't do otherwise than have the honor to be jealous of him whom she loves more than herself . . . you ought to love her for doing what she ought to do . . . and I advised her to do it and on the spot I sent away that pretty little animal; for as long as I live I will not sit quietly by and see anything diminish the friendship which souls who are so near to me ought to have for each other. . . . I am sending you the Sieur de Curton, who will tell you the rest of what I have to say to you and point out how that very proper messenger Frontenac said all over Paris that, if Fosseuse went away you would never come to court: that ought to be enough to let you recognize his wisdom and his solicitude for your honor and reputation; wanting to turn a folly of youth into an important matter for the good and quiet of this kingdom! . . . I beg you, don't put any confidence in the tricks which all use to stop you from coming here near the King, but rather believe the counsels which I give you as a mother who loves you and desires your contentment; which is to come here as soon as you can, in the certainty that, if you do it, you will never have more contentment in your whole life than you will receive from the King and all this company." [2]

During the year since this letter had been written the dislike of Henry III for his sister had increased and he now showed it by inflicting on her a terrible public humiliation. Some years before he had insulted her by an unsuccessful attempt to catch her in scandalous conduct. How depraved Margaret's character was, at this time, it is difficult to say. Later and under other circumstances, her conduct became

[1] The word used is extremely unambiguous.
[2] Letts. VIII, 36.

so entirely disreputable that it has cast a bad light even upon her earlier years. That she had at this time a great reputation for gallantry does not prove very much, for the court of Henry III was probably the most evil minded that has ever existed and every woman in it was apt to be labelled gallant if she possessed that due modicum of good looks necessary to render interesting stories about her plausible.

At the end of the summer of 1583 the King suddenly ordered the Queen of Navarre to leave the court and it was generally known that he had accused her of disgraceful conduct. At their first halt to pass the night, sixty archers of the royal guard appeared, searched everything even to her bed, arrested two of her ladies-in-waiting and eight others of their suite and carried them back to Paris. The King questioned them very severely about his sister's behavior and the child she was reported to have given birth to during the eighteen months of her stay at court. Being unable to get any certain evidence, he finally dismissed them and ordered his sister to continue her journey to her husband. The King afterwards said that he took this action by the consent and advice of his mother, and Catherine never said anything to her daughter to suggest that she had objected to it. That Catherine advised action bringing open scandal upon the family, simply to reprove bad conduct in her daughter, does not seem consistent with her usual method of procedure. The probability is that the true explanation of the King's action is to be found in a passage of a letter of Catherine's written about a week before to her right hand man Bellièvre, which has escaped the notice of writers on this episode. She informs him that she has just found out that her daughter had sent a secret messenger to try and persuade her younger son to refuse to do what the King wants him to do and to induce him to "take some evil resolution." (Probably to join the Huguenots or declare himself head of the Malcontents.) An attempt to come between her and one of her sons was the thing Catherine

could never endure. Anger and the desire to break up this very dangerous combination, seem to have led her to advise her older son to drive his sister from the court as soon as possible and the indiscretion of Margaret's conduct (to use the mildest term possible) gave him a ready weapon to do it.[1]

No sooner had the thing been done than its folly became apparent. They had deeply offended Margaret and made her more than ever inclined to advise her younger brother to revolt. They had hardly conciliated the King of Navarre by such a terrible public insult to his wife and they had stained the honor of their own name. The King of Navarre at once sent a messenger to his brother-in-law to point out that it must be true, either that his wife had been unjustly insulted or else she had been guilty of conduct which made it impossible for him to take her back. Henry III, after vainly trying to deny the facts which were too public to be concealed, had to excuse himself by the wisdom of his mother who had counseled him to act as he had done. He insisted that his brother-in-law should like a good subject receive the sister of his King. Catherine as well as the King became exceedingly alarmed lest her husband should not take her back. Catherine sent her confidential agent Bellièvre to manage the affair and wrote him rather threatening letters in regard to what might happen if the King of Navarre should "put such a disgrace upon the sister of his King." But she soon abandoned this tone for earnest supplication. "I beg you do not abandon the matter of my daughter, nor return before you have, if possible, put her once more on good terms with her husband; because, if you return before that has been done, I am very much afraid that we shall fall again into our earlier history, to the ruin of this poor kingdom and the too great infamy of all our family." Finally, eight months after Margaret had been so summarily dismissed from her brother's court, she was rec-

[1] De l'Estoile, II, 130; Arch. C., X, 94; Mornay, II, 370; Letts. VIII, 116, Busbecq. Imp. Amb.

onciled to her husband and they appeared to live in outward amity.[1]

Catherine was delighted when she heard of this result and wrote a lcng letter to Bellièvre with her own hand, containing advice which she wished him to give to her daughter. As is always the case when Catherine writes without the help of a secretary about something in which she is very much interested, the letter is exceedingly prolix and involved and it is better to condense and paraphrase parts of it:

'I will commence my letter by telling you that, after God, you have returned me to good health, by having through your prudence and good conduct brought to an end so good a work and so important for all our house and our honor, as to have put my daughter on a good footing again with her husband. I pray God that she may long remain so and live like a woman of good character and honor and like a princess born in the position to which she was born. I believe that she will do it and that God will aid her, but let her continue to recognize Him; as I am assured that she has continually done since I have seen her. I beg you, before you leave, to lay before her all the things which, you know better than I can tell you, ought to be considered and done by persons of her rank and also urge upon her to be surrounded by people of honor both men and women; for not only our life but also the company which we have around us has a great deal to do with our honor or dishonor and especially for princesses who are young and who think that they are beautiful. Perhaps she'll say to you as she's always said, that I have all sorts of people around me and that I kept company with all sorts of people when I was young. To that there is an easy answer which cannot be gainsaid. When I was young, I had a King of France for a father-in-law who gave me such ladies in waiting as he pleased and I was obliged to obey him and to keep company with everybody whom he liked and to obey him. Since he has been dead his son, to whom I had the honor to be married, was in his place; to whom I owed the same obedience and more. Thank God such persons never had such power over me that they led me to do anything against my honor and my reputation. And if, now that I am a widow, and my own mistress, she says I ought to send them all away and not keep company with any of

[1] Mornay, II, 364; Letts. VIII, 149 n., 155, 157, 172.

them, you can reply I have had the task of keeping loyal all the subjects of the Kings my children and drawing them to court and not to offend them. . . . Also being what I am, known by everybody, having lived as I have up to the age which I now am, I can talk to and keep company with everybody. Let her do as I have done and, when she comes to my age, she can do the same, without offense to God nor scandal to the world. But now, being the daughter of a King and having married a prince who calls himself King, . . . I say that she ought to reject everyone who is not worthy to be near a wise and virtuous princess, young and who thinks that she is perhaps prettier than she is. I don't know who'll say this sort of thing after you have left, for of course I shan't write to her any more since she's with her husband, because he'll see the letter. Therefore I beg you to say to her that she mustn't do any more as she has done and make much of those to whom he makes love, because he will think that she is very glad that he loves somebody else in order that she may be able to do the same. Don't let her cite me as having done the same thing, because, if I made good cheer to Madame de Valentinois, that was the King and besides I always made it quite plain to him that it was to my very great regret; because no woman who loves her husband ever loves his 'Putain'; for it is not possible to call her anything else even though the word is a vile one to use among us decent women. And tell her not to allow him any more to make love in her household to her ladies-in-waiting, because, if I had been the daughter of his King as my husband was my King, I assure you that if I had known it I would never have endured it. . . . I believe that has injured her in his opinion and that he has thought she didn't love him, but, in obeying him in those things which good women owe to their husbands, she can let him know that the love she has for him and the consciousness of what she is, won't let her endure treatment of that sort and he cannot do anything else than find it very good and esteem and love her the more for it." [1]

There was something else beside maternal affection behind this strong desire of Catherine's that Margaret and her husband should remain on good terms with each other. She seemed to have less love for Margaret than for any of her children, even the intractable youngest son, and in the end she came to wish, in anger and bitterness, that Margaret had never been born. But there were three reasons

[1] Letts. VIII, 181.

why Catherine was anxious to keep her hold upon Henry of Navarre through her daughter. Neither of her two sons were in robust health and she was frightened by the predictions of the astrologers in regard to them. In case of their death, Henry of Navarre would be the heir to the throne and it was desirable that the wearer of the crown and this not too distant heir to it should stand together. In the second place, ever since the Holy League had forced the King to declare himself its head at the time of the Estates of Blois, Catherine and Henry III were very much afraid of the power which popularity might give to the house of Guise. They knew that, in the case of absolute necessity, they could rely certainly upon the backing of the Huguenots against the Guise and the League. In the third place Catherine and the King knew that Henry of Navarre, as the head of the Huguenot party, could, with his foreign alliances and the support of the Politiques, renew the civil war whenever he wished, and the terrible dangers of the reign of Charles IX had been vividly recalled to her memory by a most dramatic event which took place three or four months before the quarrel with Margaret.

Young de Mouy, son of the Huguenot chief treacherously killed in 1569 by Maurevel, the "King's Killer" and the would-be assassin of Coligny, came to Paris from his estate in Picardy to see the woman he hoped to marry. In the street young de Mouy met the murderer of his father. Supported by his friend Monsieur de Saucourt and the ten or twelve members of their suites, he attacked the murderer, who was guarded by ten or twelve men, some of whom, in open defiance of the royal edict, were carrying firearms. Maurevel, who was armed with a corselet, tried to shoot de Mouy with a pistol, but de Mouy struck the barrel aside and the bullet killed a poor tailor at his window. Then Maurevel tried to get away. De Mouy fell upon him from behind with such eagerness that he gave him three sword wounds and he died the next morning. De Saucourt fell with a wound of which he died in a few hours and the

followers of the two gentlemen being disorganized, de Mouy was left unsupported. One of Maurevel's followers shot him through the head and he fell dead, but an old soldier among his followers mortally wounded two of Maurevel's band. When Catherine heard of this pitched battle in the streets of Paris in which five men had been killed, she summoned the council and proposed to have de Mouy's head cut off from his dead body, on the ground that he had broken the Edict of Pacification. But almost all opposed this and represented that two great mischiefs would result, one, that gentlemen would be discouraged in their filial duty to avenge their fathers, and the other that the door would be open to all traitors who wished to assassinate boldly and without fear of revenge. Catherine might well hesitate to offend the son-in-law who could let loose the fiery flood of unappeased passion with its springs deep in ancient wrongs, which such a story suggests to us.[1]

The troubles of Catherine in the year 1583 were not confined to her younger children. Although her letters contain no allusion to any difficulty with the King, we know that his growing peculiarities were a great cause of sorrow to her and that his policy was bringing a slow estrangement between them. The two traits already prominent in his character had by this time reached exaggerated proportions: the religiosity which produced a most bizarre effect against the background of the debauched life of his court, and the weak indulgence to his mignons which was giving to his plan of gathering around the throne a body of men dependent only upon himself, the air of an effeminate mania.

His passion for the flagellants, which he had shown at his entry into the kingdom on his return from Poland, revived and he joined in processions of courtiers clothed in the garb of penitents beating each other with scourges. This unusual form of penitential exercise was disliked by the orthodox clergy, who denounced it in the pulpit, hated by the people, who rioted against it, and parodied in a mock

[1] Cal. F. 1583, p. 251.

procession by the lackeys of the court. The King silenced the preachers, took strong measures against the riots and had eighty of the jocose valets given a flagellation which they unanimously agreed was no joke. Not satisfied with this occasional display of religious emotion, the King began to wear regularly the habit of a penitent with a great collar of ebony adorned with skulls carved in ivory around his neck, and a hair shirt underneath his robe, but finally upon the remonstrance of the Nuncio renounced the continuous wearing of this habit as not fitting for a King. He did not stop his pilgrimages, where the young Queen shared his devotional exercises whenever he would let her and was known to march for hours halfway to her knees in the mud. From one of these pilgrimages the King got back so lame and exhausted that he had to go to bed and be treated by the doctors.[1]

After having been checked by the unimpeachable authority of the Nuncio in his fantastic liking for the flagellants, Henry determined to find a special way of religious observance which should not be thought unfitting to his rank. He arranged therefore to have a hermitage just outside the city in the wood of Vincennes. The hermits were to be twelve in number, five cardinals, three bishops and four dukes besides the King, each one accompanied by a single servant. A dress was very carefully prescribed of gray cloth with a white cross on the left arm surrounded by four fleurs de lis. Their little cells at Vincennes were all hung with gray cloth and the six little platters, the candlesticks, the two carafes—one for wine and the other for water—which each one contained, were all of silver. As he found the noble hermits not too apt to submit to strict discipline and ascetic fare, in spite of the fact that on meat days they had their choice of five kinds of meat, he sent down to Toulouse and brought up eighteen friars who were reputed to live only on vegetables and to pray all day long.

[1] Cal. F. 1583; Arch. C. 10, p. 85; Neg. Tosc. IV, 463, 465; B. N. It. 1733 f. 75, 86, 144, 1732 f. 372.

To this reinforced band of hermits, he became so devoted that one of his chief counselors of state was obliged to point out to him that he had been King of France before he became head of the hermits and that he was neglecting the duties of the kingdom. Catherine was very much put out by this exaggerated and malapropos piety of her son and she savagely attacked his confessor, a Jesuit, on the ground that he had turned the King into a monk to the great injury of the kingdom.[1]

But though the King was thus devoted to pious observances, it must not be supposed that he was ready to submit all his political or ecclesiastical ideas to the direction of the papacy. The doctrine of the papal infallibility had not yet become *de fide* and it was perfectly possible for a pious Roman Catholic, particularly if he had been brought up in the French church and accepted what was known as the Gallican point of view, to refuse in all good conscience to follow the suggestions of the Pope not only in the field of politics, but even in regard to the management of the national Church. Thus when the Duke of Savoy planned to capture Geneva, which had revolted against the sovereignty of his ancestors, Henry, in spite of the fact that Geneva was the center of the propaganda of heresy, sent word that he would "never fail in the protection promised in his treaty with that city." His action so disgusted the Nuncio that he wrote to Rome: "I am forced to believe that this King in serious matters wants to serve God if God will do what he wants, but not otherwise." [2]

In the matter of defending the privileges of the Gallican Church, the King proved less steadfast. The Nuncio received orders from Rome to print and circulate an old papal bull which forbade the clergy to pay taxes to secular authorities unless they were authorized by the Pope. Some of the Bishops immediately sent word to Parlement that

[1] Nouillac ctd. 71 from Villeroy; Busbecq. Arch. C. X, 86; Cal. F. 1583, p. 258.

[2] B. N. It. 1733 f. 75, 256; A. N. K. 1560 f. 71; Arch. Vat. 11, 30 July, 1582; Cal. F. 1582, pp. 208, 226, 315.

they could not pay any longer the tithes and other subsidies, because the bull said that those who paid or collected them were excommunicate. Parlement arrested the printer and a Jesuit concerned in the publication. They issued orders to all bailiffs to take away the copies of the bull from the Bishops and if they still persisted in publishing it, to seize their property for the King. The King bitterly complained to the Nuncio that he had a hand in publishing a document which made him out to be a heretic and Catherine showed an equal anger. Parlement actually cited the Nuncio to appear before them for acting against the privileges of the national Church. The King, however, did not stand by this position and when he announced a new tax upon the clergy, the Nuncio sent word to him not to take the communion the next day, because planning to lay hands on the goods of the Church made him excommunicate, and, if he communed, he would do so to the damnation of his soul. Henry deferred the collection of the tax. But he proved more intractable in the matter of the adoption of the canons of the Council of Trent for the Gallican Church. They were stoutly resisted, because it was believed that they meant the introduction of the Inquisition, of which even orthodox France had a great horror. The King also thought that the Decrees of Trent abridged the privileges of the Crown in ecclesiastical matters. He therefore did not press their adoption, although he seems to have originally promised the Pope that he would do so. In this attitude he was doubtless supported by his mother, who had taken a similar line of policy during the reign of Charles IX.[1]

What troubled Catherine the most about her oldest son's conduct, was his growing dependence upon his mignons which brought with it an increasing unwillingness to listen to her advice. The change made in the royal household as early as the beginning of 1582, must have seemed to her very ominous. Marshal de Retz, one of Catherine's most intimate adherents, who had served as first gentleman of

[1] B. N. It. 1731 f. 411, 1733 f. 60, 75; Arch. Vat. 4 Oct. 6 Nov.

the bedchamber to Charles IX, had been continued in that office by Henry III on his return from Poland entirely on the intercession of Catherine. The reader will remember that the King, who had determined to give the position to another man, had finally yielded to his mother's importunities so far as to allow de Retz to serve as first gentleman of the bedchamber for half the time. It was remarked by those on the inside that Catherine was relying on de Retz to keep her informed of all that the King did, just as he had done in the case of Henry's older brother. The King now dismissed de Retz from the position and bestowed it upon one of his mignons.

From the band which surrounded him Henry had finally singled out two to become the chief pillars of his throne: the Duke of Joyeuse and the Duke of Epernon, and he was in the habit of saying publicly that he loved them as if they were his sons. He had married Joyeuse to the sister of his Queen and he was now anxious to marry Epernon to one of the daughters of his dead sister, the Duchess of Lorraine. But he was obliged to give up this idea because of the strong opposition of the young woman's father and Catherine. His desire to promote these young men was bringing him into sharper and sharper conflict with some of the leading nobles of France. When a false report of the death of his brother-in-law, the Duke of Mercoeur, reached Paris, the Duke of Nevers, to whom some years before he had promised the next vacant governorship, asked to be appointed Governor of Brittany. The King said he must have patience because he wanted first to persuade Joyeuse and Epernon who were his two sons that he ought to have it. The veteran courtier and warrior who had spent his whole life in the royal service, was deeply offended. He abruptly left his apartments in the Louvre and went to his own house. Catherine immediately took up her lifelong task of conciliation, went to him the next day and spent two hours vainly trying to persuade him not to leave court.

She did not give up, however, but continued to write him letters, of which the following is a specimen:

"My Cousin:

"The Abbé Gadaigne has come to see me and I am very glad to have the chance to drop you this word which has no other object than to remind you that you have not and never will have, a more trustworthy nor better relation and friend than I will be to you all your life. . . . I wish you were here—your wife and you—in order that you could walk in my allées and decide to make some like them at your château. I am going to hunt the stag near your forest, if he's willing to be hunted with your permission and, if the dogs are willing, I will catch him." [1]

A more serious quarrel arose with the Duke of Montmorency about the desire of the King to take away from him the governorship of Languedoc and give it to the father of Joyeuse. The governors had come to be regarded as irremovable except for cause and Montmorency very naturally objected. Once again Catherine endeavored to play the peacemaker and the King got her to write to the Duke inviting him to come to court to discuss the matter, on her word of honor that he would be safe. He replied that "if she was in the authority which she had at other times and which she deserved to have, he would not fail to come, but, knowing that the King showed he did not trust so much in her counsels as he had at first and as he ought to, he did not see in what way she could guarantee his safety;" a letter which threw the King into very great wrath. About a year later, Montmorency actually put an army of six thousand men and artillery into the field against a town in which Joyeuse had placed a garrison. The King on hearing of it said that if Montmorency did not stop he would burn and lay waste all his houses and lands around Paris, to which the Marshal replied that if his houses were burnt "he would light a fire in Languedoc which would send the smoke even to Paris." This threat of renewing his alliance with the

[1] B. N. It. 1733 f. 17; Letts. VIII, 106; Comp. 94, 147.

Huguenots was too serious to be neglected and the matter was compromised.[1]

In spite of these troubles the King continued to show the most exaggerated favor to the two new Dukes, Joyeuse and Epernon. He sent his guards to free a partisan of Epernon who was under sentence of death for murder. He showered money upon them and an officer of the treasury, "a man worthy of faith," assured the Ambassador of the Emperor "the King since his return from Poland, that is, in seven years, has employed in enriching his mignons about six millions of livres." This growing influence of the mignons, which became so great that on at least one occasion the King said he had not the time to talk to his mother, was an increasing grief to Catherine, who said that God "kept her alive only in order to see what she did see and know how little her son cared about her." When she remonstrated with him on the ground that he was making his favorites so great that it would be hard in case of need to abase them, he answered that he wanted "to make them so great that neither he nor anyone else after his death would ever be able to abase them." Catherine was grieved over the situation, not only because the excessive piety and the excessive favoritism of the King attacked the ruling passion of her life, her desire for authority and influence in the government, but also because it threatened danger to the Crown. She was not used to borrowing trouble and waited until dangers actually materialized before she met them, but she felt that the growing discontent which had for a time been dissipated, was now gathering in very menacing form, and many proofs have survived to show that her fears were justified.[2]

The following letter written by the mother of the Princess of Conti to the Duke of Nemours describes the situation at court:

[1] B. N. It. 1733 f. 64, 344, 347; Neg. Tosc. IV, 61.

[2] De l'Estoile, II, 63; Arch. C. X, 78, 82; Córdoba, II, 495; Lib., XII, Ch. 11; Neg. Tosc. IV, 444; B. N. It., 1733 f. 75.

"I have never seen this court more full of trouble, envy and hard feeling and the chief nobles more aroused than they are for that which has happened in Flanders: I mean the bad luck of the brother of the King. The Queen Mother is so afflicted over it that all her servants are in the greatest trouble and all the misfortunes of the court are blamed upon the head of two people. There are so many malcontents that the number is infinite . . . and I wish I was in your beautiful garden with you for one hour, so that I could tell you what would be too long to write."

It was doubtful if any part of the kingdom could be trusted in an emergency. In many places the King was hated by the people. Paris refused an extraodinary levy of two million francs and matters were not helped when the King replied in a very high tone that he was master not only of this little money, but of all their purses and of their lives too. In the end of the year the King called from all the provinces an Assembly of Notables nominated by himself. He heard from them complaints as to the administration of justice, the condition of the finances and the toleration of the Huguenots. He answered that the way to get rid of the Huguenots was for the clergy to amend their lives and convert them and ordered an investigation of the finances which caused great terror to many of the officials, who saw the gallows looming up before them. But it was soon evident that this assembly had not been called so much to hear and redress complaints as to collect more money. The King demanded four million francs of extra taxes which the delegates said they had no authority to grant.[1]

Catherine knew very well the obstinacy that was hidden beneath the soft exterior and easy going ways of her son. About this time she asked him not to go any more incognito to dinner at private houses in the city without guards. He thanked her and said he would take care. After he had left the room she turned to the secretaries and asked them not to let the King "forget her warning," adding, "I know his

[1] B. N. fds. fr. 3355 f. 56; B. N. It. 1732 f. 439; Haton, II, 1080; B. N. It. 1733 f. 17, f. 436, 469, 1723 f. 223, 234, 256; Arch. C. X, 78.

nature and he must not be directly opposed in anything he wants to do, but diverted dextrously; otherwise opposition makes him more determined to do it." Many well authenticated stories show how well Catherine described the nature of her older son and how intolerant he was of any open opposition to his plans or wishes. One day, in the spring of 1584, in the royal council the Prior of Champagne replied to the demand of the King for another large sum of money, that "to speak the truth, new taxes could not be thought of because the people were entirely too much burdened already." The King was so angered that he tried to draw his sword, and not being able to get it out of the scabbard, called for a dagger. The Chancellor and other great lords rushed between them and the Prior fell upon his knees asking for pardon. The King beat him over the face and shoulders with a rolled-up paper that he held in his hand and drove him from the council. It is evident that, with her son in this excitable mood, it was rather dangerous for Catherine to remonstrate too much about any policy that seemed to her unwise.[1]

[1] B. N. It. 1733 f. 338, 426; Arch. C. X, 110; Neg. Tosc., IV, 494.

CHAPTER XL

DEATH OF ANJOU. TREATY OF NEMOURS

After his pitiable fiasco at Antwerp, Anjou began to prove more tractable. He came unexpectedly to court and appeared in the sick room of his mother. She sent at once for the King. Anjou fell at his brother's feet and begged him to pardon the errors of his youth, promising to be an obedient subject for the future. The King raised him and embraced him with extraordinary affection; which so moved Catherine with joy that she could not keep back her tears, "which fell abundantly from her eyes." Anjou remained a few days at court where he was treated with the most extraordinary honor and then returned, full of hope about receiving aid to renew his attacks upon the Netherlands. But his course was almost run. A hasty consumption had seized him and in the month of April it was common talk that he must die. The doctors buoyed up Catherine with false hopes, as they had done in the case of Charles IX, and she kept writing even in the month of May that, though his illness would be long, he would recover. But the doctors confessed to everybody else that the heir to the throne could not live more than a few weeks. On the afternoon of the tenth of June, 1584, he died. The news came to the King at night, but he would not let his mother know until the morning, when he went and told her before she got up. None mourned for the young prince except his mother, for he seems to have made many bitter enemies and no real friends. Catherine's affliction was sincere and when she received the Venetian Ambassador many hours after the news had come, she could not keep back her tears and "twice had to wipe them from her eyes in my presence." This grief showed itself rather characteristically by her

great interest in giving him a magnificent funeral upon which the King spent two hundred thousand livres. Catherine even had a wooden doll made and dressed in precisely the same way the reigning queen was dressed the day when she went to put holy water upon her brother-in-law's body and she sent it with a coat and mantle to the Queen of England, in order that she might know how to dress at the funeral services which were held in Anjou's honor in London.[1]

Great territories in France which Anjou had held as a semi-independent ruler fell in to the Crown, and he also made his brother heir to the city of Cambray in the Netherlands, which he had taken from the Spaniards with the help of its rebellious inhabitants. This legacy the King was unwilling to accept lest it should involve him in war with Spain and it was agreed that the Queen Mother Catherine should receive it as a private legacy. The inhabitants, who hated the Spaniards, hailed this arrangement with enthusiasm and readily swore fidelity to Catherine. During the rest of her life she maintained the garrison and the city was ruled in her name. Spain, after a vain protest, agreed to a truce in regard to their claim upon Cambray. The King said the whole matter was a "private affair of his mother's with which he could not interfere, and knowing her well he felt sure that she would consider it a conscientious duty to hold that city, acquired by the blood of a most dear son, as a remembrance of the love he always showed her in his life." [2]

The estates of the revolted Netherlands were very eager to have the King of France assume the position which had been held by his brother under the title of the Duke of Brabant, and Elizabeth of England was extremely anxious that something should be done to protect the Netherlands in order "to check the greatness of Spain now become

[1] B. N. It. 1733 f. 323, 403; Arch. C. X, 108, 113, 115; Letts. VIII, 176, 180, 183, 188; Neg. Tosc. IV, 528.
[2] Letts. VIII, 191, 229 n.; B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 7746, It. 1733 f. 522.

dangerous to every potentate in the world." She had a long interview with the French Ambassador and sent a special envoy to France to urge the joint protection of the revolted states. If the King was not willing to do this in his own name, she was quite satisfied that it should be done in the name of Catherine; provided proper support was given in men and money. The general impression at court was, that Catherine favored accepting this proposition, but her correspondence makes evident that she had changed position and was now no more anxious for open war with Spain than her son. She skilfully avoided giving a direct answer, and even blocked the reception of the special envoy until it was too late for action.[1]

Wise observers had foreseen that Anjou would make even more trouble by his death than he had made by his restless and incompetent life. His death left Henry of Navarre, a heretic, head of the Huguenots, heir to the throne, and the Cardinal of Bourbon, Navarre's uncle, had already announced that the people of Paris could never accept a heretic king. As soon as the King knew of his brother's death, he sent his favorite, the Duke of Epernon, to offer, if Henry of Navarre would declare himself a Catholic, to secure absolutely his succession to the throne. Catherine was very much afraid about Epernon's reception because of the old quarrel between Margaret and this courtier when Margaret had been at the court of France. She wrote, therefore, the day after Anjou's death, to her agent at the court of Navarre:

"My trouble, which is as great as you can think, prevents me from writing you a long letter. You can imagine what my affliction is, seeing me unhappy enough to live so long that I must see everyone I love die before me: although I know very well that one ought to bow to the will of God and that everything is His and that He does nothing except lend to us for as long as it pleases Him, the children He gives to us. . . . I beg you to say

[1] B. N. It. 1733 f. 490, 545, 561, 1734 f. 4; Letts. VIII, 199, 202, 213, Hubault ctd. 121.

to the Queen of Navarre, my daughter, not to increase my affliction, but to receive Monsieur d'Epernon."

If she does not Catherine feels quite sure that the King will never want to hear her name mentioned again. He will be so extremely offended that he will take it as an insult given directly to him. This time Margaret did what her mother wanted, but it is the last thing she ever did that pleased her mother.[1]

It was ten months before the trouble which many people foresaw would follow the death of the Duke of Anjou, really came, and opened a new series of wars, the Wars of the League. The leader of the League movement was the Duke of Guise. He was supported by his entire family, by a large number of the French nobility including his relative the Duke of Mercoeur, the Queen's brother, and the Duke of Nevers, and was secretly leagued with two foreign potentates, the Duke of Lorraine, head of the house of which he headed the younger branch, and the King of Spain. The alleged object of the movement was to save the throne of France from falling into the hands of a heretic, but many contemporaries, Catholic as well as Protestant, thought the strongest motives in the minds of the chief actors in the movement were not purely religious. The comments made upon the Duke of Guise and his family by the Spanish Ambassador for some years before the outbreak of the movement are very illuminating.

As early as the year 1577, he wrote to his master that the Guise wanted to become kings and were secretly behind writers who alleged their descent from Charlemagne, while the King was only descended from Hugh Capet. Philip wrote on the margin of the dispatch, "If a pretext can be found for treating with them it would be useful." In spite of their huge revenues, the Guise, who imitated the sumptuous life of their father, were then in extreme financial embarrassment, and they were selling their land

[1] Letts. VIII, 190, 194, 196, 200.

piecemeal to meet living expenses. A little later (March, 1578) the ambassador referred again to their claims of descent from Charlemagne and thought their designs were suspected by the King and his mother and that their power was declining. He added that it would be a good thing if they could be secretly supported. Before the end of 1578 they were making overtures to the Spanish Ambassador, promising to do everything they could, even to using force, to keep the Duke of Anjou out of Flanders. They began to ask Spanish help for an expedition raised secretly in France to attack England by way of Scotland. They also tried to get money from the Pope in order to abduct the little King of Scotland, their nephew, and educate him as a Catholic. The Pope at first consented to this plan but never gave them money for it and Catherine was so strongly opposed to it that it was evident the little King, if they did get him out of Scotland, could not be brought up in France. In spite of his suspicions, the King had continued a very amiable and even flattering attitude towards the house of Guise, but this did not conciliate them and in the end of '79 the Spanish Ambassador thought them ready to "take off the mask if they were helped a little" and advised that they should "get more than words." Frequently after this the Duke of Guise brought or sent information stealthily to the Spanish embassy to help Spain to understand or to block the action of France, and the Ambassador urged that so "loyal a man" ought to be a regular pensioner of the King. Philip did not act upon this advice and for some three years communications between Spain and the house of Guise were confined to vain suggestions from the Duke of Guise of his readiness to raise and lead an expedition against England, if Spain would give him the money.[1]

By the time of Anjou's death, the King had acquired a deep hatred of the Guise which was the motive of his strong

[1] A. N. K. 1543 f. 134, 1544 f. 4, 1546 f. 6, f. 45, 1548 f. 38, 1588 f. 21, 120, 1561 f. 3, f. 7, f. 78, 90, 116; B. N. fds. fr. 3338 f. 86; Arch. Vat. 11 May, 7 June, 13 Aug., 1578; Feb. 14, 18, 1579.

desire and effort to make friends with Henry of Navarre, but when the Guise came to court for a formal visit of condolence, in September, 1584, Catherine persuaded him to conceal his dislike, because their mother had complained to her that the King was thinking of having her sons arrested. The King, therefore, showed them during their stay of about a month very extraordinary courtesy. Not long after they left, suspicious news began to come from various parts of the kingdom. For instance, one of Henry's secret agents at the court of Henry of Navarre reported that a pilgrim passing through Brittany had a quarrel with a peasant in a drinking shop. The pilgrim was beaten into insensibility and when some of the bystanders were trying to help him, they found in his clothes a packet of letters from the Duke of Guise to leading men among the local gentry with plans for seizing four of the chief cities of the province. Similar messages were reported from the neighborhood of Perigord and when Navarre asked Montmorency about it, the Marshal replied that he thought the report was entirely true. From many other parts of the kingdom information came that leagues were being formed similar to the suppressed league of 1576 and troops were mustering. As a consequence of this information, the King issued in December an edict prohibiting all his subjects from joining any leagues or associations. But the grave situation of France was so little known generally among the courtiers, that there was much discussion whether this edict was directed against the Guise or against the Huguenots and there was a general impression that the King had acted hastily on vague suspicion and was rather sorry for what he had done. This opinion was mistaken. As a matter of fact the situation was more dangerous than any that had been faced by either of the King's brothers, in the days when Catherine swayed completely the policy of the government.[1]

[1] Neg. Tosc. IV, 603; B. N. C. C. C. 9 f. 153, e.g. B. N. Nouvs. Acqs. 7746, Oct. 11, 1584; B. N. It. 1733 f. 506.

In two meetings of the heads of the house of Guise and their chief adherents with representatives of the King of Spain and of the Cardinal of Bourbon, at Nancy in September and Joinville in December, 1584, a formal secret treaty had been signed between these princes and the King of Spain; making a league offensive and defensive for the defense of the Roman Catholic Religion and the entire extirpation of all heresy from France and the Netherlands. The Cardinal of Bourbon, who was proclaimed successor to the throne, engaged, if he acceded to the throne, to proclaim the canons of the Council of Trent, to renew with Philip II the Treaty of Cambrésis and to return the city of Cambray. In exchange, the King of Spain promised to pay fifty thousand écus a month, beginning as soon as the civil war began. A place was reserved in the treaty for the signatures of the Dukes of Mercoeur and Nevers. It was agreed that it should be kept secret until the close of the following month of March, when the first payment should be made (an implication that the war should then begin) and the Duke of Lorraine guaranteed the payment of a part of the subsidy.[1]

No sooner was the Treaty of Joinville signed, than Guise began to display great activity in secretly levying men, and this activity seems to have made Catherine's suspicion definite. In the beginning of March, 1585, she wrote to him that, according to her promise to tell him any reports affecting his loyalty, she felt bound to send him word that she had heard that thirty cornets of cavalry dismissed by the Prince of Parma (the Spanish governor of the Netherlands) were coming into France to take service with him and that they would be ready to march on the 15th of this month. She says she does not believe it, but feels bound to tell him, feeling sure that he will tell her that it is not true. To stop all such false reports she urges him to come to court where he will be most gladly received by the King. But the Duke of Guise had done very much more than this in preparation for open resistance to his

[1] B. N. Béthune 8866 f. 9, Comp. Davillé, Bouillé, Rübsam.

King. He had engaged a considerable force of mercenaries in Germany and the Catholic cantons of Switzerland and covered all France with a network of associations joined together into a Holy League for the extirpation of heresy and the defense of religion. This league included a large section of the nobility north of the Loire, but it was particularly strong among the cities. Besides Paris and all the cities of the Isle de France, eighty-eight important towns scattered over France from Provence to Brittany were members.[1]

We have an example of the way in which this great league of cities was formed and of the strong popular feeling to which it appealed, in the confession afterwards made to the King by an agent of the Guise in launching the Holy League at Paris. The way for it had been carefully prepared by writings and sermons which described the suffering of the Roman Catholics under persecution in England. In order to increase this impression of the danger of persecution of Roman Catholics if Henry of Navarre came to the throne, engravings showing the martyrdom suffered by the English Catholics were posted through Paris and lecturers with pointers in hand explained them to gaping crowds. When these were ordered suppressed by the King, the plates were found in the Hotel de Guise. But the agitators, finding that engravings did not make sufficient impression upon the public, had prepared a huge picture painted in very vivid colors and carried it about the city, resuming their informal lectures on the dangers of a heretic King.[2]

On soil thus prepared, the seed of the League was sown. Nicholas Poulain, Lieutenant of the Provost of Paris, deposed afterwards that, on the 2nd of January, 1585, he was visited by a lawyer, whom he had known for twenty years, who after having talked in a general way, told him that they could give him a chance to make a big sum of money

[1] Letts. VIII, 239; Arch. Vat. Fr., I, B.
[2] E. g., Pamphlet signed "An English Catholic." De Thou saw this picture, VI, 443.

and the favor of many great lords of Paris and elsewhere by which he could surely rise in life, provided he would do what they were about to ask him to do for the defense of the Roman Catholic faith.

"I swore to do it and was told to come the next day to a certain house. There I found with them the Seigneur de Meyneville, who came from the Duke of Guise. He told me that there were more than ten thousand Huguenots in the faubourgs who wanted to cut the throats of Catholics in order to give the crown to the King of Navarre. Therefore all good Catholics ought to arm secretly, in which they would be supported by the Princes of the house of Guise, the Pope, the King of Spain, the Prince of Parma and the Duke of Savoy."

In consequence of this and subsequent conferences, Poulain bought a very large quantity of arms, in spite of the royal edict forbidding the unregistered sale of arms, and hid them in the Hotel de Guise and various other houses. With the help of a part of the city police, he enrolled the majority of the inhabitants in many quarters of Paris, and, through other agents, many men in various trades; like the boatmen on the river, the butchers and the men whose business lay in the horse market. They were all told that the Huguenots intended to kill the Catholics in order to bring the King of Navarre to the throne and that if they did not have arms, arms would be given to them when the time came. By such methods many cities were organized, so that the League had a means, somewhat similar to that given to the Huguenots by the Calvinistic churches, of quickly raising and arming infantry.[1]

In the end of March, 1585, the Holy League issued its manifesto signed by the Cardinal of Bourbon. It declared that he and his friends had taken arms to repress heresy, which had flourished for twenty-four years and now aspired to put upon the throne a successor who would follow the example of the Queen of England and abolish the Roman Catholic religion. It then attacked the mignons, who had

[1] De l'Estoile, III, 345.

displaced the ancient nobility, got possession of the administration and finances and were continually oppressing the people with new taxes; although the debts of the King were rolling up and he never had any money. Both of these things—the increase of taxes and the permission of heretic worship—were contrary to the declarations of the Estates General of Blois. In his double character of First Prince of the Blood and Cardinal of the Roman Church, titles which compelled him to watch with equal vigilance over the welfare of religion and of the state, Charles of Bourbon, making no claim to the throne lest he be suspected of selfish motives, declared that he and his friends would never lay down their arms until these abuses were remedied. The manifesto declared that the attack was not upon the King, but upon his ministers, and it contained a warm eulogy of Catherine, to whose labors alone it was due that any religion had been preserved in France.[1]

More than two weeks before this manifesto appeared, the King had been fully warned of the rising of the League. He had taken steps to prevent the cities in the north from being surprised, and had seized a boatload of arms which was being carried into Champagne. He had also begun to raise troops in Switzerland and Germany. In spite of his efforts the cities of Vitry, Châlons and Rheims opened their gates to the League, and the situation was so bad that, even before the issuance of the manifesto, the King's most trusted agent in Champagne wrote, that the sole and only remedy was "let the Queen your Mother intervene with her authority for mediation." [2]

On the 30th of March Catherine left Paris for the north with the hope of having an interview with the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Bourbon. She spent the next three months in one of the most difficult and trying of the many long negotiations to prevent civil war with which her later life had been filled. During all but the last two

[1] De Thou, VI, 454.
[2] Herelle ctd. II, 127, 132, 135, 140.

weeks of this time, she was so ill that she frequently had to hold the conferences from her bed. She suffered excessively from gout, a stitch in the side with a terrible cough, persistent earache, toothache, pain in the arm, and headache. But the indomitable old woman never weakened either in her energy or her determination, and when the Cardinal of Bourbon sent word that he was ill and could not come, she threatened to be put in a litter and carried to see him.

The Leaguers kept her waiting four weeks before any of them would give her an interview. The first of them she saw was the Duke of Guise, who appeared exceedingly melancholy and even wept. He accused the King of an alliance with Geneva and England to the prejudice of religion and made it evident that he wanted Catherine to go back to Paris; which she wrote her son she was determined not to do, because her presence in the north interfered with the plans of the Leaguers. But determined as she was to continue negotiations for peace, Catherine from the very first wrote "baston porte paix" (the big stick makes peace) and kept insisting that if he did not "make yourself the stronger everyone will want to give the law to you." She was perfectly well aware that the Leaguers were wasting time in order to seize cities, stop the King's money and get their own forces ready, meantime "amusing her with words," but she was unwilling to give up her attempt to make peace. Very early, also, she expressed the judgment that their chief motive was not religion and that they were doing the exact opposite of what they said. The first time she saw her old friend the Cardinal of Bourbon, which was a month after her arrival at the place of rendezvous, he wept and sighed a great deal and frankly confessed that he had been very foolish to go into the matter, but that every man had to commit one folly in his life and this was his. The tears of these two leaders of the League did not make a very profound impression upon Catherine. Her own tears came very easily. Almost as

soon as she was able to write to her son with her own hand, she told him he would never have peace unless he did something for the Cardinal of Bourbon because "there is none who wants more to have what he wants than he does and the same is true of the Duke of Guise." This judgment was confirmed by men whose natural prejudices would be all in favor of the League; for the Spanish Ambassador wrote that the leaders of the League were more moved by selfish interests than religious zeal, and the orthodox envoy of Tuscany wrote, "I do not believe their motive is zeal for religion, but vengeance, ambition, and greed." [1]

At the beginning of the conference Catherine seems to have been in favor of taking hold with a firm hand, forming an alliance with the King of Navarre and frightening the League into submission by threatening to fight. As time went on she became even more convinced that there was no escape from the situation without fighting, but concluded that it would be better after all for the Crown to fight the Huguenots, and the King agreed with her. In spite of the swelling near her ear which made it impossible for her to lean over to write without pain,[2] she sent a very long letter to explain the way she thought this must be done. As usual when she writes with her own hand out of a mood of considerable excitement, it is impossible to translate the letter literally and in places it is necessary to guess at the exact meaning. This time she was conscious of the obscurity herself, for she writes at the end, "I'm afraid that you won't understand this letter any too well because I am in a great hurry and very much troubled."

She tells her son that it would be a mistake for her to do as he wishes and arrange with the chiefs of the League to join their forces to the royal army before he sent word to Navarre that Huguenot worship in France must cease. Navarre with the help of the German Princes and England

[1] Letts. VIII, 245, 257, 260, 263, 269, 270, 280, 284, etc., 311; A. N. K. 1563 f. 102; Neg. Tosc IV, 635.
[2] Letts. VIII, 261, 273.

would undoubtedly be able to defend himself and the money of the King, who proposed to pay all the expenses of the joint army, would be gone in four months. It would therefore be necessary to make peace with the Huguenots. The forces of the League would still be intact and the great popularity of Guise and his brother among the soldiers would enable them to draw away most of the royal contingent. They would never consent to a peace and the King would find himself then in precisely the situation in which he is now. She advises him to give her orders to tell the chiefs of the League that he would go into Parlement, and forbid the practice of any other religion in France except that of the Roman Catholic Church; promising at the same time to allow none but a Catholic heir to the Crown. War with the Huguenots will doubtless follow, but the King can then summon all his loyal subjects to support him in arms. "You must break up this combination and then if necessity compels us we can make peace. . . . I tell you it isn't enough to appease this trouble. You must cut out all the roots of it, otherwise you'll never be an absolute King." The King took the advice about declaring that there could be only one religion in France, but he refused to announce that none but a Catholic could succeed to the throne; because he said it was not in his coronation oath and none but the Estates General had power to make such a declaration.[1]

This resolution of the King did not immediately bring peace with the League; on the contrary Catherine wrote that she felt quite sure their chiefs were plotting to surprise more cities. She even suspected that they might be planning to give the impression that she had joined them, or that they held her a prisoner. The best she could get out of them was a promise not to allow their mercenary forces to pass the border for some days. They demanded cities of surety and other advantages and when the King granted their demands, still remained discontented. At last, after repeated interviews, Catherine, abandoning her

[1] Letts. VIII, 275, 457, Comp. 270, 457.

attitude of conciliation, told them that "their insupportable demands meant a partition of the kingdom between them and the King," to which she would never consent and rated them soundly saying "she hoped God would avenge her for the mockery they had put upon her by keeping her waiting round so long and abusing her patience by such trickery." She fell almost into despair and wrote to her confidant, Bellièvre, that she saw nothing ahead but "a great and general trouble throughout all France," at a time when the King without money could not support armies.

But apparently the League chiefs were only trying to see how much they could squeeze out of the King, for, on the 7th of July, Catherine signed with the Cardinal of Bourbon, the Cardinal of Guise, the Duke of Guise and the Duke of Lorraine, what is known as the Treaty of Nemours, which was ratified the next day by the signature of Henry III. It was agreed that, by perpetual and irrevocable edict, the practice of any other religion except the Roman Catholic religion should be forbidden in France and that all ministers of any other religion should leave the kingdom within a month. Within six months, all subjects must make profession of the Roman Catholic religion or leave the kingdom; with permission, if they chose, to sell their estates. Heretics were incapable of holding public office. The leaders of the League were granted the right to keep from twenty to seventy harquebusiers for their guard, and the Dukes of Mercoeur, Guise, Mayenne, Aumale and Elboeuf were granted from one to four fortified cities of surety apiece to hold for five years. Money already paid to the German mercenaries by the League was to be repaid to them and the rest of the sums due was to be paid by the King.[1]

Catherine felt, as she always did after any of the many negotiations in which she brought peace out of war, that she had saved the state. Her improved health and the reaction from her long anxiety put her in a merry mood which

[1] Dumont, V, 453.

communicated itself to her suite and on her way home, at the château of Lagny, while time hung heavy on their hands, one of the wildest of her ladies-in-waiting, Madame de Simier, proposed to Catherine to have a little masquerade. The ladies-in-waiting dressed themselves as men and the Cardinal of Bourbon and Monsieur de Bellièvre like women with veils made out of bed curtains. Taking them on their arms they presented them to Catherine, who laughed very heartily to see such old and wise counselors so disguised. But the Peace of Nemours instead of being the salvation of the kingdom was the beginning of even worse troubles and dangers than France had yet seen. It encouraged and put the stamp of royal authority upon the League and gave the chance for its terrible struggle with the Crown; which was only brought to an end years later by the genius of Henry IV. If the King had "mounted his horse and fought" the chances of success would have been better than they were later and to have fallen in battle would have been a nobler death than the one he met. The provinces of the north and center were for the League, but the west and the south were loyal. Henry of Navarre offered to bring fifteen thousand men to his support and the Queen of England offered to sustain him with six thousand infantry or the money for six thousand Swiss. The house of Montmorency with all its followers of the Politique party, would have stood by him and the great influence of the King in France, which even his folly and bad government could not destroy, would have rallied to him a mass of people who belonged to none of the extreme parties. The ablest of his mignons, the Duke of Epernon, whose partisans possessed a great deal of power, was strongly in favor of the King's fighting it out. Many of the cities were loyal and even in Paris itself the Parlement was soon to show strong objection to the renewal of war against the Huguenots.[1]

There were three great nobles, not connected either with

[1] Brantôme, B. N. It. 1734, Ap. 2; Girard, I, 110; Villeroy, 37.

the Politiques, the Huguenots or the Guise faction, whose attitude might be a matter of doubt and anxiety to Catherine and the King. The most influential of these, the only one who possessed long standing hereditary influence among the French nobility, was a prince of the blood royal, the Duke of Montpensier. His father had been one of the few great nobles of pure French blood who had taken any share in St. Bartholomew, but, at the time of the Estates at Blois in 1576, he had been converted to the idea that peace, which implied of course a certain degree of toleration, must be made with the Huguenots. The old duke had died three years before the family of Guise made its connection with Philip of Spain, and his son who now bore the title, although a nephew of the Duke of Guise, was not at all favorable to the League. He wrote to the King that the gentlemen whom he had summoned to muster their companies of gendarmes had all made frivolous excuses so that the King could not depend upon their forces, but he would be able, if he had commissions and money sent him, to find dependable captains who would levy companies in their stead.[1] Later he refused a command against the Huguenots on the ground that he thought the cause of the war was not zeal for religion but the ambition of the Guise.

The Duke of Nemours was a grandson of a Duke of Savoy, and the second husband of the Duchess of Guise. He had influence but when the League began, he was so crippled with gout as to be helpless. He died just before the treaty between the League and the King, and Catherine wrote two consoling letters to his wife, who had been her friend for nearly thirty years, trying to comfort her with the thought that, although she could no longer see the husband she loved, she was at least saved the pain of seeing him languishing in such terrible suffering. She sent her word as the best means to help her bear her grief that her sons had "emerged from the labyrinth in which bad counsel had involved them, for this morning we have, they and I,

[1] Loutchitzky, pntd. 172.

signed a peace which I hope will be of long duration to the honor of God, the service of the King, the good of this kingdom and to their complete contentment." [1]

The Duke of Nevers, a naturalized Italian, younger son of the Duke of Mantua, whose wife was the niece of the Cardinal of Bourbon and a cousin of Henry of Navarre, was at first secretly, but rather timidly, connected with the League. Either troubled in his conscience or, as may be suspected, because he was afraid to stake it all on the hazard of the die, he decided to go to Rome and see what the Pope thought about the League. It was this visit which caused Catherine to write to his wife that she had heard reports which she was unwilling to believe that the Duke had attacked the character and reputation of the King to the Pope. She wished to know the truth and felt confident that the Duke would be able to deny them flatly. Now these reports of which Catherine spoke were entirely true, for Nevers had described the King to the Pope as an incapable coward. But the Pope was not sure enough about the true inwardness of the League to grant easily the bull supporting it, which Nevers sought. The Duke, after about two weeks' stay in Rome, returned to France and Catherine at once began correspondence to reconcile him with the King. She wrote nearly twenty letters inside of five months, two thirds of them to the Duchess, who was a sister of the Duchess of Guise and less willing than her husband to abandon the cause of the League. Nevers could not deny the facts, but he wrote a series of letters to Catherine, denying things with which he had never been charged, and hotly demanding to know the names of his calumniators. Catherine showed these to the King and finally got him to write a cold letter of acceptance. With this situation, which at least avoided an open break, the indefatigable reconciler had to be content.[2]

Out of this affair of the Duke of Nevers there grew an

[1] Letts. VIII, 339, 343.
[2] Letts. VIII, 292, 343, 366, 374, 378; De Thou, VI, 460; d'Ars, 176.

incident which made Catherine consider undertaking a longer journey of reconciliation than any she made in her life.

With the formal union of the League, Spain and Lorraine, the Papacy never had any connection. Sixtus the Fifth, who mounted the papal throne in the midst of Catherine's negotiations which ended with the Treaty of Nemours, was both too shrewd to accept the mere assertion of unselfish zeal as a proof of righteousness and too much of an anti-Spaniard to join easily in the support of anything which was controlled by Philip II. He was, however, sufficiently affected by the narrative of the Duke of Nevers, to replace the Nuncio in France by the Bishop of Nazareth; who on his previous missions had shown himself so strong an adherent of the house of Guise, that the Politiques and Loyalists were wont to apply to him the verses of Scripture, "Can any good come from Nazareth?" In consequence, when the new Nuncio arrived at Lyons, he found there royal letters ordering him to halt and not pursue his journey any farther. The Pope's answer to this was to order the French Ambassador to leave Rome within twenty-four hours and the pontifical state within five days. Catherine at once wrote the Ambassador a letter filled with resentment and consolation. Right on the heels of this news, word came that the Pope intended to launch an excommunication against the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé and declare them incapable of succeeding to the throne of France. Catherine wrote to the royal councilor Villeroy, one of the five men on whose advice the King chiefly depended, that she wouldn't "care a button" for any plots or schemes if the King only had the means to raise an army that made him the strongest. The Pope talked about sending two millions of gold. "I would be sweet to anybody, whether he was Pope or King, to get the means of raising such forces that the King could command and not obey; as for commanding and not being obeyed, it's much better to pretend not to want anything except what

one is able to get, until the time when one is strong enough to do what one ought to do." She adds that she does not see much use in going to Rome as the King wants her to, because so long as they are the feebler they have to do everything that's asked of them anyway. "If it wasn't for the fact that I amuse myself as much as I can going hunting and taking walks, I think I should become ill." [1]

It was finally decided to send the Bishop of Paris instead of Catherine, to arrange matters with the Pope and Catherine gave him a letter in which she told His Holiness that there was no princess in Christendom more zealous for the Roman Catholic Religion than she was; the proof of which was the "education she had given to her children in which God had granted her the grace to make them all as . . . intensely Catholic as any kings that had ever sat upon the throne. This last one was the most religious of all and she prayed God to grant her the grace before she died to see . . . religion entirely restored in the realm." The Archbishop of Nazareth was finally received at Paris and, a year later, the French Ambassador was again received by the Pope in Rome. The bull excommunicating the King of Navarre was issued in September, 1585, and was received with great anger in France by all but the adherents of the League. The Parlement of Paris, although it was an entirely Catholic body, looked upon the bull as an intolerable infringement by the Pope of the sovereign national right and denounced the members of the League as men who were using the piety and devotion of the King in order to cover their own impiety and rebellion. They denied "that the Princes of France had ever been subject to the justice of the Pope," and pointed out the deaths of great numbers of men, women and children that must follow the renewal of the war about religion. Henry of Navarre, whose latent heroic qualities were being developed in the hour of his need, posted a defiant answer upon the pedestal of the

[1] Arch. Vat. App. 1; d'Ars, Letts. VIII, 347, 350; B. N. 1734, June 29, 1585, Villeroy, Brulart, Bellièvre.

statue of Pasquino in Rome. It was this incident that was the beginning of the admiration of Sixtus V for the courage and skill of the King of Navarre; an unprejudiced admiration which he also bestowed upon Elizabeth, saying that besides her, there were in all the world, only one man and one woman who were really worthy to reign.[1]

Catherine had no such understanding of Henry of Navarre. She still persisted in her inopportune efforts to bribe him or frighten him into becoming a Roman Catholic. She was the typical member of a family, which, for generations, had moved toward greatness through an atmosphere of unscrupulous business ethics and city politics whose factions thought the assassin's dagger as legitimate a tool of the game as the bribe, the stuffed ballot box, or secret borrowing from the public treasury. Henry was the descendant of a long line of feudal princes who, however corrupted and wicked, still did homage in word and thought to certain ideals of chivalry. A technical gentleman is no less apt to be bought and sold than a roturier. But, with all his weaknesses, Henry was really a gentleman. The convinced arrivist Catherine, the product of a line of speculators, politicians and ecclesiastics who thought nepotism and simony a matter of course, could not possibly understand the man she was dealing with. The offer to desert his old comrades in arms and go over to the other side, in the face of terrible danger, offended, not his religious faith, for religion sat lightly on him, but his sense of honor. He felt that "A gentleman does not change his religion as he changes his shirt."

It was characteristic of that passion for matchmaking which runs almost like an obsession through all Catherine's diplomatic activity that she should now conceive the idea of ending all the complicated troubles of the crown in a wild carnival of marrying. The chief pawn in this new game was again her daughter Margaret, whose marriage,

[1] Letts. VIII, 357; Robiquet ctd. 227; de l'Estoile, II, 212; De Thou, VI, 521.

sealed in the blood of St. Bartholomew, she now proposed to dissolve. Margaret was then to be remarried to the eldest son of the Duke of Lorraine. In addition the Prince of Condé was to be married to the daughter of the Duke of Guise and one of his brothers to the daughter of the Duke of Nevers. It is difficult to understand how a woman of Catherine's shrewdness could have supposed for a moment that those concerned would take any other attitude towards such a plan than that of the Duke of Guise when he reported her offer to his patron and paymaster, the King of Spain. "As far as I am concerned I would sooner see anyone dear to me dead than consent to such a plan and I am certain that the Duke of Lorraine and the Duke of Nevers will feel the same way."[1] But Catherine's passion for match-making was apt to run away with her wits.

The surrender of the King to the League in the Treaty of Nemours meant of course the renewal of the war against the Huguenots. When Henry of Navarre heard of what had happened, he wrote to Catherine, "I hear now that Your Majesties have arranged peace with the authors of the League on the condition that . . . a good part of your subjects should be banished . . . and the conspirators armed with the force and authority of the King against them and against me, who hold such rank in this realm, that I am obliged to oppose the ruin of the Crown and House of France with all my power." Henry himself afterwards told two separate people that, on hearing the news of this treaty, he remained for some hours with his head buried in his hands, and that when he raised it, his mustache had turned white. This obstinate refusal to repeat, now that it would bring him a very good chance to succeed to the throne of France, the abjuration he had made after St. Bartholomew, seemed to Catherine nothing but the display of a queer character which had baffled her best arts. When the Venetian Ambassador, commenting on the complete failure of her journey of negotiation to Navarre—the only com-

[1] De Croze, pntd. II, 359.

plete failure of such a journey in her lifetime—said: "Navarre is not afraid of trouble," she smiled and answered, "Oh, nobody in the world leads a more strenuous life than he does. He never has a fixed time for sleeping or eating; he lies down to sleep with his clothes on. He sleeps on the ground. He eats at any time. I brought him up with my sons and he gave me more trouble than all the rest of the boys put together." [1]

In the midst of the anxiety and illness of her long negotiations with the Guise over the Treaty of Nemours, there came to Catherine a personal grief which seems to have hurt her more than all the sorrows her children caused her. Her only living daughter, Margaret, the wife of Henry of Navarre, secretly joined the League, made an excuse to go to the city of Agen, which was part of her appanage, raised two companies of soldiers and entered into communication with the Duke of Guise. She afterwards increased her force to twenty-two companies and started to build a citadel. For six months she remained at Agen, waging a feeble and unsuccessful war against the neighboring cities of her husband, until she was driven out by an uprising of the inhabitants, infuriated by the plundering of her undisciplined troops. At first, Catherine misunderstood the nature and cause of her abandonment of her husband, was sorry for her and tried to have money sent to her, supposing that she was in actual want of food. But when she heard the truth, that Margaret had joined the League, she wrote that "she had been so troubled that she had really thought she was about to die, for she had never been so overwhelmed by any affliction that had come to her." As time went on her grief grew and she finally wrote, "I see that God has left me this creature for the punishment of my sins through the affliction which she gives me every day. She is my curse in this world." [2]

[1] Letts. Missives, II, 114; d'Aumale qtd. Matthieu, La Force, B. N. It. 1737 f. 39.

[2] Letts. VIII, 269, 291, 300, 318, IX, 12, Lauzun passim; B. N. It. 1734, June 14; A. N. K. 1563 f. 135.

CHAPTER XLI

THE LEAGUE FORCES WAR. THE KING ARMS

During the first five months of the year 1586 we know very little of what Catherine thought or did about public events. She was in Paris except for a brief visit to a country house of hers just outside the walls and only twenty-six of the letters she wrote during this time have survived; whereas for the rest of the year we have about two hundred. These letters, even where they are in some way connected with public affairs, have about them a certain personal quality. Two of them are addressed to her grand-daughter, the Infanta, and contain congratulations on the birth of a boy together with her own joy "to see the continuation of the race of the Queen your mother whom I still love so much." Five of them concerned her own business affairs, and there is one fine specimen of her ever recurrent anxiety to do kindnesses for her relatives, dependents and friends by the use of her influence in the distribution of patronage. A letter to the royal secretary Villeroy, records her anxiety that the broken tool Dom Antonio of Portugal should not be allowed "to die of hunger." She is unable to help him herself because she has on her hands two or three others, Italians, who are also dying of hunger, and she records her anger at those who "have no heart and can't see farther than their nose, so that whenever there's any talk of doing anything for a stranger who isn't born within the kingdom, they think that it's all money thrown away." [1]

It is also quite characteristic of Catherine that in this little broken series of her letters for six months, a quarter should consist of letters trying to reconcile people who were

[1] Letts. IX, 4, 12.

offended with the King—for Catherine's self-imposed task of pouring oil upon the wheels of government by reconciling jealous and warring personalities, a task for which long practice had developed such patience and skill, was ended only by her death. She was still engaged in soothing the offended susceptibilities of that touchy person, the Duke of Nevers, and she begs him, in order to receive the satisfaction to his wounded pride he wants, to copy and send to the King as his own a letter she encloses. She writes in a similar strain to the Duke of Guise that she loves and esteems him very much and that he ought to be willing to write a good letter to the King, copying "word for word" a model which she sends him; which will surely bring him the sort of satisfaction he wants from the King. She wrote also two soothing letters to two royal functionaries, begging them to hand over their offices to a young favorite of her son, and one to the Duchess of Montmorency, urging her to show herself "a wife who really loves her husband" and persuade him to obey the King.[1]

That Catherine was an affectionate grandmother is shown again in the joyful letters she wrote over the birth of her first grandson to the young Duchess of Savoy. She already had one illegitimate grandson, the son of Charles IX by his gentle Protestant mistress, Marie Touchet. The blot in the escutcheon did not check Catherine's interest in the boy and just at this time she had an opportunity to advance his fortune. Henry of Angoulême, the bastard son of her husband, Henry II, was acting as governor of Provence. He had a mortal hatred for a Florentine, Philippe Altoviti, commander of royal galleys in the Harbor of Marseilles, because he suspected Altoviti of secretly sending unfavorable reports to the court. He therefore sent word to the Florentine that if he dared to show himself before him, he'd treat him as he deserved. One day, while the governor was passing through a street, he happened to look up and saw Altoviti standing at a window looking

[1] Letts. IX, 9, 10, 12, 398, 401.

down. He immediately left his guards at the gate of the house, rushed in like a madman, and ran his sword through Altoviti's body. Altoviti, by a last effort of strength, drew his dagger and stabbed the governor to the heart. The governor's guards, who by this time found their way to the room, fell upon the dying Altoviti and pierced him with a score of wounds. Then they dragged his body through the streets, cut it to pieces and threw it into the harbor. One of the offices held by the governor had been that of Grand Esquire of France of the Order of the Knights of Malta. Catherine at once interested herself in the effort to have this office transferred to her illegitimate grandson, and wrote to the Pope urging him to give the necessary dispensation to enable the boy, who was only thirteen, to accept the high office.[1]

By the summer of 1586 the difficulty of carrying out the program of the League and suppressing Protestantism by force was becoming more and more apparent. The Huguenot country comprised the southwestern third of France and its frontier line ran, roughly speaking, in a southeasterly direction from the south bank of the Loire below Angers to the mountains of Dauphiny. The Prince of Condé, who had the task of defending the left of this line, was unsuccessful, his army dissolved and he took refuge in the island of Guernsey. But elsewhere the Huguenot leaders held their own against their local antagonists of the League, only slowly reinforced by the royal troops. The Baron d'Allemagne commanded the anti-League forces in Provence and they could not be dispersed. Although the large cities of Dauphiny were in the hands of the Leaguers, the Huguenot partisan Lesdiguières held the mountains and took several of the smaller towns. Montmorency more than held his own in Languedoc. Henry of Navarre, who was General-in-Chief of all the Huguenot forces, defended the provinces of Guienne and Gascony. The pestilence was raging in many parts of France and the poor harvest

[1] De Thou, VI, 679; Letts. IX, 17.

was fast bringing famine conditions. Catherine summed up the situation, writing in September from her château of Chenonceaux:

"I don't know if you are any better off where you are than we are here, because it is the most pitiable spectacle in the memory of man. Besides pestilence, famine and war, there has come a flood which has drowned many persons and an enormous number of cattle, so that all this poor people is crying out for mercy and God makes us see that He wishes by every means to punish us and to force us to recognize our faults. But it may please Him that we should profit by the lesson to amend our sins, so that He may have pity on this poor afflicted realm. And we will give Him the greatest thanks if it may please Him to give us a good and lasting peace; for that is the only method to restore this realm; otherwise I see no way in which it can be saved." [1] 26th Sept. 1586.

All these sufferings were aggravated by the very heavy taxes, which caused not only intense murmurings but even riots and hanging of tax gatherers. In spite of the large sums raised, the credit of the King was steadily declining and by the autumn the merchants were demanding fifty per cent for loans. The chief cause of this financial situation was of course the war, but it was aggravated by the extravagance of the King and those around him. The president of the chamber of accounts refused in the name of his fellows to confirm certain levies, saying that two such levies had already been given to the Queen Mother, five to the Duke of Joyeuse, five to the Duke of Epernon, two to the Duke of Guise, one to the Cardinal Joyeuse, one to Madame de Nemours, one for the wedding of the Princess of Lorraine, and that others were destined to personal pensioners of the King. The people of Paris followed this lead in a more primitive fashion. The Italian bankers were insulted on the street and all sorts of libels began to appear against the King and the Queen Mother. Nevertheless the mere suggestion of peace caused many of the pulpits to thunder

[1] E.g. Carorguy, A. N. K. 1564 f. 73; Neg. Tosc. IV, 644, 684; B. N. It. 1733, June 5; Mornay, III, 463, 466, 474, 476; Letts. IX, 53.

against the sin of any composition with heretics. Catherine herself was obliged to get the Bishop to intervene to silence some of the excited preachers of Orleans, who were attacking her and all those who advocated peace.[1]

This however was by no means the unanimous feeling of the orthodox of France. To many faithful Catholics the League seemed "profane rather than holy," the result of the "ambition of the house of Guise" and not "of religious zeal." The consequence of this feeling was the formation of a counter league by the Roman Catholic princes of the house of Bourbon with the exception of the Cardinal. Its head was the strictly orthodox Duke of Montpensier and it included many representatives of the oldest houses of France and many governors of cities in the centre of the kingdom. The fundamental difficulty of the situation was that the King was not able to inspire respect in any of the factions. He seemed determined to add to his reputation already acquired for debauchery the fame of childish frivolity. The year before he had become so interested in the game of cup and ball, that he was in the habit of playing it even as he walked along the street, and the courtiers, from the Dukes of Epernon and Joyeuse down to the lackeys and page boys, imitated him. This childish passion was now replaced by another. From his grandfather's time, his family had always maintained a great hunting outfit and Charles IX never sat down to dinner without two or three favorite hounds lying under the table. But Henry III became afflicted with a veritable mania for collecting a certain fashionable type of little dog known as the dog of Lyons. The King's liking for these animals reached abnormal proportions. He sent one of the chief officers of state to the Ambassador of Venice to beg him to buy in Venice a pair of them "whiskered, woolly, white, but if that wasn't possible, red and white." On these dogs, whose acquisition he treated with the seriousness of an affair of state, he lavished

[1] B. N. It. 1735, July 3, July 5, Oct. 24, Dec. 5; Burel, 101; de l'Estoile, II, 352; Letts. IX, 36, 37.

huge sums of money. Scores of them traveled around with him wherever he went, with a whole retinue of men and women attendants to care for them and one writer estimates probably with some exaggeration that, when he returned from his visit to Lyons, the presence of these pets added six hundred horses for their baggage and attendants to the huge royal train.[1]

The trait of morbid intensity continued to appear in the King's religious exercises. At intervals he lived very much as if he were "a hermit or a pilgrim." In March, 1586, for instance, he made a pilgrimage to Chartres, walking fifty-four miles through the mud and rain, fasting and holding vigils most of the night. Sixty-four courtiers of his order of the Flagellants started with him on this journey where no conversation was permitted except Dominus Vobiscum, and Deo Gratias. Fifty of his original companions dropped out by the wayside. But in spite of the intensity of his religious observances, the King proved once more that his religious zeal was limited by his political interest, by repeating his former attitude in regard to a plot against the city of Geneva. The Duke of Savoy believed he had an excellent chance to surprise that city and began to assemble troops for the attempt. The collecting of the necessary provisions and munitions on the southern slopes of the Alps, attracted the attention of Henry III, who sent word to the Pope that he thought the enterprise came not out of religious zeal, but from ambition. He regarded any one who attacked Geneva as much his enemy as if he attacked Paris, and he was willing "to stake his crown on the issue rather than allow the city to fall into the hands of the King of Spain or the Duke of Savoy, which was the same thing." Catherine was at first disposed to be very much alarmed over this enterprise of Geneva, but in the end seemed to look upon it as only a cover "for preparations for the attack upon England." Although it had been very

[1] Neg. Tosc. IV, 636, 647, 654; B. N. It. 1735, Mar. 12; Brantôme, de Thou, VI, 682; d'Aubigné, VII, 102.

much more dangerous in itself and in its possibilities than she knew, the outcome justified her attitude of indifference towards it. Philip of Spain was absorbed more and more in the gigantic preparations for his English expedition and the coffers of the Pope were drained almost dry by the huge contribution of eight hundred thousand scudi a year which he was making towards it. They finally withdrew altogether from the enterprise against Geneva and the Duke of Savoy knew that it was impossible for him to attempt it single-handed.[1]

It would be a mistake to suppose that this King, who showed by turns an effeminate carelessness and monkish zeal, was as idle, or as entirely indifferent to the management of his state, as he sometimes seemed. The closest observers, who blamed him the most, did not feel so. Care had turned his hair snow white at the age of thirty-five, as it had that of his great adversary, the Duke of Guise. A keen observer thus describes him at this time. The King "rises before day and works his mind very hard. He is secret, patient, of tenacious memory and great powers of dissimulation. He is very ready in answering and when he wants to get out of doing anything he has an admirable way of avoiding it." [2] Although he granted his mother less control over the government than she had had since the death of his brother Francis II, she was still his most weighty adviser and whenever a great crisis required anything of capital importance to be done, he turned to her to do it. He now asked her to journey to the south to meet Navarre and try to get such concessions from him as would close the ruinous war without provoking a fresh civil war from the side of the League.

Catherine had suffered intermittently during the year from colic and gout. These kept her in bed and prevented her from taking that great amount of walking which, since

[1] Neg. Tosc. IV, 639; B. N. It. 1735, Ap. 11, f. 167, Raulich ctd. 255, 256; Letts. IX, 61, 83.
[2] Neg. Tosc. IV, 635, 639.

she had grown too stout to ride, was her chief exercise; and her great appetite which she was no better able to control than she had been when she was younger, made matters worse. But the vigorous old lady (she was now sixty-eight) would not yield to her infirmities. When the rheumatism crippled her right hand, she signed her letters with the left and when, on one of her journeys of reconciliation, she had to spend some time in a strange château, she ordered a bridge of wood to be built to give her ready access to a little park in which she might take the air. That the stiffness of her joints did not affect the springs of her spirit is sufficiently shown by this extract from a letter written about this time to Villeroy, one of her intimate friends and the King's closest counselor: "Whoever it is who said to you that which Monsieur de Villiquier has told me was said to you, lied in his throat and I'm very sorry that my sex and my rank in life prevent me from enforcing the lie which I have given him with my sword. But if I find out who it is, I'll make him confess his lie in the hands of an executioner, for he deserves the rope." Catherine knew that every possible influence would be used to make her mission futile and that every possible lie would be used to destroy her influence. But she started out full of hope, which was shared by her admirers, for one of them wrote: "Peace will be made because Caterina de' Medici has never turned her attention to anything in this kingdom without bringing it to the end which she desired." [1]

As soon as it was determined that she was to undertake negotiations with the King of Navarre, she took the wise precaution of writing to the council of state to beg that the armies of the King should not be suffered to disband, but, on the contrary, should be kept in the highest degree of efficiency; otherwise her negotiations would be lamed and her chances of getting a favorable peace would be all but

[1] B. N. It. 1734, Jan. 20; 1736, Mar. 3, Oct. 18, Dec. 19; A. N. K. 1564 f. 54 ib. 1566, Apr. 5; Arch. Vat. Apr. 28; Letts. IX, 67, 98; Neg. Tosc. IV, 668.

destroyed. She also repeatedly urged unrelaxed vigilance to prevent the Hugenots from surprising cities or seizing some passage over the Loire which would give their forces easy access to the country north of that river. It was six months before she could arrange any meeting at all with her son-in-law. The first three of them she spent on the Loire, mainly at her château of Chenonceaux, and on the first of November, 1586, started slowly toward the south. She went about a hundred miles in the direction of La Rochelle and did not return for four months and a half. The greater part of this time she spent in what must have been a most tedious and more or less uncomfortable fashion, waiting around at small places with poor accommodations, hoping vainly for her son-in-law to meet her, or at least answer her offers, and during the whole time when her chief object was this effort to make peace with the Huguenots, she did not cease her labors and cares for the government.[1]

She was active in maintaining order, repeatedly writing to various officials and gentlemen upon whom she thought she could depend to repress the incursions of Huguenot raiders. One phase of this general disorder, by which war was threatening to degenerate into brigandage, troubled her very much, and that was robbery of the mails, which rendered communication exceedingly dangerous and uncertain. These stolen letters were very apt to be handed over to the Huguenots at once and it was a great trouble to her "not to be able to write more than half what one thinks." These robbers operating in her vicinity had of course a particularly keen eye for the tax money of the King and waylaid the tax collectors whenever they got a chance. This gave them the double pleasure of filling their own pockets and injuring the enemy. What might be called volunteer tax collectors also bothered her a great deal. Sometimes these were soldiers or officers of the King who kept together in spite of orders to disband. Sometimes they were the regularly appointed tax collectors of the Huguenot

[1] E.g. Letts. IX, 25, 29, 31, 44, 49, 52, 56, 63, 69.

party, who extended their operations, not only over the cities and towns of the Huguenot obedience, but also over the loyal subjects of the King who were compelled to pay double taxes. Thus the Huguenot Captain du Bourg wrote about this time to the city government of the town of Sahuguède that he had orders from the King of Navarre to collect from them their taxes and that he advised them to hand them over and not make him collect them by execution. He added this postscript:

"I beg you don't give me the excuse that you've already paid to the King for I know very well that you haven't paid and even if you had paid, knowing that you must pay to me, that makes you inexcusable. Your good friend,

"Du Bourg." [1]

During these weary months while Catherine was trying to negotiate peace and at the same time help in managing the kingdom, she was troubled also about more distant things. Mary, Queen of Scots, had been for many years a prisoner in England. She had become involved in plots against the English throne which included the murder of Elizabeth, and a large number of Englishmen, exasperated by these repeated conspiracies, had long wanted the dangerous prisoner put to death. She had now become an accomplice before the fact in a plot formed by one of Elizabeth's own gentlemen to murder her. With this plot Catherine and her son had no sympathy, for they hated the thought of a scion of the house of Guise on the throne of England. Had they known of it beforehand, they would undoubtedly have warned Elizabeth, but nevertheless they could not consent to the execution of an ex-queen of France, the daughter-in-law of one and the sister-in-law of the other. The King sent Bellièvre to England to plead with Elizabeth to spare Mary's life. Catherine wrote to recommend to him the utmost zeal and he delivered before Elizabeth a long and very learned harangue in which he quoted

[1] Letts. IX, 80, 88, 91, etc., ib. 111, 159; Lestrade, 138, ib., pntd. 139.

from Homer, Socrates, Virgil, David, Cicero, etc., and received from Elizabeth a very brief and almost blunt reply from which he augured the worst for Mary. How much Catherine really blamed Elizabeth for consenting to the death of a woman who had planned to kill her and how deep personal regret she herself felt for her daughter-in-law is difficult to say. The gossip at court was that Catherine had never liked Mary. Only three letters to the unfortunate Queen of Scots by her first mother-in-law are printed. There is a fourth one in the British Museum written in 1582 which refers in very friendly terms to her pleasant memories of Mary's kindness and docility and professes an affectionate desire to help her, but Catherine's protest was not particularly vigorous when Mary actually stood before the steps of the scaffold and there is nothing in her letters on the subject which goes beyond the decorous expression of a natural pity. Some people at the French court believed the King had no objection to Mary's death because it weakened the house of Guise.[1]

One of the things that claimed Catherine's attention during these long months of waiting and negotiating, was the extraordinary affair of Anne de Caumont, the daughter by a second marriage of the widow of the enormously wealthy Marshal St. André, one of the men advanced to power and wealth by Catherine's husband. The tutor of the young heiress, the Seigneur de la Vauguyon, had succeeded with the help of the King in marrying her, against her mother's opposition, to his oldest son the Prince of Carency. The son of Marshal Biron, who had been very much in love with the young woman, provoked a duel with her husband which was fought, three on a side, just before Catherine started on her mission to the King of Navarre. The Prince of Carency and his two friends were killed and the father-in-law of the rich young widow wished to remarry her almost immediately to his second son.

[1] Teulet, V, 484, B. M. Caligula, C. VII, f. 50, pntd. Eng. Hist. Rev., 1922, Paul van Dyke.

The King, with whom he was a favorite, again helped him in his plans, but the mother of the young woman offered her hand to the oldest son of the Duke of Mayenne, the brother of the Duke of Guise. Mayenne, who commanded one of the royal armies, seized the young widow, who was in her father-in-law's château, and carried her off to his government of Burgundy. The King, who was utterly unable to compel the Duke to return her, appealed to Catherine to get her back. Catherine took up once more with zeal her familiar rôle of conciliator and sent a messenger to try to persuade the Duke of Mayenne to send her, through the medium of his own wife, to her hands, assuring him that he ought to trust her, "if he would give her the means of satisfying the demands of the King, to persuade the King to content him." Her intercession was unavailing and the heiress was not returned, but apparently she refused to marry the son of her captor: for, eight years later, she married a younger son of one of the princes of the blood royal.[1]

But Catherine had more intimate troubles than these. She was much worried during this period about her two surviving children. About Christmas time of the year 1586 the King was indeed in very serious danger. A conspiracy had been formed among certain citizens of Paris to seize him in his palace, to kill all the royal council, to "send all the house of Bourbon, Catholic and Protestant, to the other world except the Cardinal," and put the League in full control of France. Catherine did not know the definite details of this danger but just before Christmas she wrote to her son begging him "not to go about any more alone and to have good care taken about what he ate." [2]

Catherine's already bitter resentment of the conduct of Margaret was now deepened. The Queen of Navarre had soon found herself unable to maintain the position of an independent sovereign opposed to her husband and allied

[1] Letts. IX, 120; de Thou, VI, 677.
[2] Poulain, pntd. de l'Estoile, III, 345; Neg. Tosc. 677; Letts. IX, 120.

with the League. By September, 1586, her money was all spent and her jewels were seized by those from whom she had borrowed. Her chief creditor, a nobleman of Auvergne, had been kept faithful to her because he was in love with her, but, seized with jealousy, he one day stabbed a young man in her room so that the Queen's bed was all spattered with blood. Leaving this rather terrifying friend, Margaret found another in the person of Aubiac, a young noble without fortune, and her relations to him excited very widespread scandal. She was now fallen into extreme poverty, and writing letters to her mother and brother in which she alternately "threw herself at their feet and begged them to have pity on a long misery" or suggested to her mother "who had brought her into this world and who wished to take her out of it" that she would know how "to kill herself before she would fall into the hands of her enemies and face degrading ruin." What Catherine thought about the situation we know only from a letter of the King ordering the arrest of Margaret, the banishment of all her ladies-in-waiting, the seizure of all her property even down to her jewels and household furniture and her imprisonment under strict guard until further orders come "from the Queen my good mother." "The Queen my mother urges upon me to have Aubiac hung and to have it done in the presence of that miserable creature in the court of the château. Arrange to have it dextrously done." To this harsh letter Margaret's brother added this harsher postscript: "The more I think about it the more I resent the ignominy which that miserable creature is bringing upon us. The best thing God can do for her and for us is to take her out of this world." Aubiac was hung—one report says by the feet—and then cut down and buried still breathing under the gallows. Margaret remained in very rigorous confinement two months; at the end of which time she so charmed her jailer that he deserted the royal cause and joined the League. She sent him to Lyons to consult with some of its leading members and during his absence opened the gates of the

château where she was confined (one of the most impregnable in France) to a garrison sent her by the Duke of Guise which enabled her from that time on to defy the anger of her mother and brother.[1]

During these months from mid-summer 1586 to mid-spring 1587, there ran through all the cares and interests of Catherine the larger thread of her task of persuading Henry of Navarre to make compromises which would enable her son to grant a peace the League and its followers would accept. Although Catherine began trying to meet Navarre in the end of July, it was the middle of December before she succeeded in doing it. Catherine, in her own account of the interview written that night, says "she has talked to the King of Navarre in the gentlest possible words as if he were her own son." It is evident, however, that from the start Catherine tried to force Henry to the unfortunate position of offering conditions on which he would make peace. Henry refused to fall into this trap and, so far as we can make out, the interview ended with mutual reproaches, phrased with a considerable degree of sharpness; though still kept within the bounds of respect. A second interview, the next day, brought no better results. For example: Catherine urging upon Navarre his dangerous position and the need of making peace said, "that he could not do what he wanted even in La Rochelle." He answered, "Excuse me, Madam, but I don't want to do anything except what I ought." The Duke of Nevers (of the Italian house of Gonzaga) here interrupted in order to tell him that he couldn't even levy a tax in La Rochelle. "That's true," answered Navarre, "and you might add that we have no Italians among us." It was finally agreed after several interviews that a truce should be made for that portion of France, in order to enable the King of Navarre to summon deputies from the Huguenot party and consult with them.[2]

[1] B. N. It. 1735 f. 219, C. C. C. 29 f. 751; A. N. K. 1564 f. 219; Letts. IX, 120; Neg. Tosc. IV, 662, 665, 669; Lauzun, 257.

[2] Letts. IX, 111; Mem. Ligue, II, 76, VII, 64; B. N. St. Petersburg pntd. partly; Letts. IX, 114. Phrases are not Catherine's.

At the end of six weeks he sent to Catherine asking for a prolongation of the truce and a month's pay for the garrisons of the towns which had been promised to the Huguenots in the original edict of pacification. To these demands, which were rather hard either to accept or reject, Catherine made a characteristically clever reply. She pointed out that the truce was a farce, because the garrisons instead of being kept in their posts were allowed to roam through the country pillaging. Nevertheless she was willing to prolong it for ten days more and she offered orders for collection of taxes on the villages nearest to their lines for the sum which they demanded. She asked for an immediate answer and added that, if the King of Navarre would not accept these terms, she was determined to go home. "To tell you the truth," she wrote to her son, "I know perfectly well that your officials have no authority whatever in the villages on which I have given these orders of collection and that they won't be able to raise a penny on them." [1]

Henry of Navarre could afford to take complacently this attempt to trick him, because he was gaining time to muster the force of mercenaries which was being raised for him in Germany. Catherine began about this time to suspect that she had been outplayed at her own game and wrote to her son advising him to send someone to Germany to find out the truth, though she felt confident the Huguenots were "making the wolf bigger than it is." She wrote to her confidant, Bellièvre:

"Heaven, earth and the abyss are all against this poor kingdom and here I do not know what I can hope for. God must be very angry and we very wicked to suffer such great evils and to see no hope of escaping them if He does not turn His hand to our help. That's what I hope for, that He will show His power and that He wants us to see that He alone has saved us, for I cannot believe that, having preserved us always, He will not do so this time when we have more need of His help than we ever had."

[1] Letts. IX, 147.

That this was no exaggerated mood of depression, is shown by the letter of the shrewd Florentine, Cavriana, two months later: "This realm has lasted a long while. I believe its poles are worn out so that it must fall and split up into several. . . . In two years there will be five or six Kings in France." [1]

One last effort Catherine was willing to make, but when she advanced still farther south to Fontenay le Comte, it was immediately made evident to her that she was in a position of some peril. The soldiers of her guard were charged close to the gates of the town. Navarre sent word to her that, as his only way of coming to meet her through the heavily wooded, marshy country was by boat on a rather narrow stream, he would expose himself to the danger of being shot from the bank and that therefore he would send the Count of Turenne to represent him. Catherine, on the other hand, was secretly warned that if she went farther into the marshy country, the followers of the King of Navarre would seize her and all her company. In this atmosphere of suspicion, carefully maintained by those in Navarre's suite who did not want peace, the two last interviews with Turenne came to nothing. Catherine finally abruptly refused to prolong the truce for two months more in order to allow the Huguenot deputies to assemble. She said that would be only to anger the League and allow the Huguenot mercenaries time to muster. The truth was that Catherine had come south, not to make concessions to the Huguenots, but to persuade Henry of Navarre to change his religion. Navarre had never intended to do it, but he dexterously spun out the negotiations to gain time for the mustering of his German troops. Catherine had been more decidedly beaten at her own favorite game of conciliatory negotiations than ever before in her life. She started for Paris and on the journey she wrote to Bellièvre:

"Certainly it's no time to let our hearts fail. I know well that you have more courage than your robe usually indicates,

[1] Letts. IX, 147, 148, 158, 163, 167; Neg. Tosc. IV, 687, 690.

just as God be thanked, God has given me more than is usual in my sex for affairs which are considered desperate, but I do not consider ours that sort because I believe—if only the King will believe so and act on it—that he will be very quickly master of all his evils . . . and that it only depends upon him to have everything go as it ought to go. For that it needs force, patience and perseverance." [1]

By the end of March, 1587, Catherine was back in Paris but she did not remain there long. The tireless negotiator soon had to undertake another mission of conciliation. There were bad reports about the condition of Picardy and closely connected with this trouble there was the threatening attitude of the family of Guise in Champagne. For the first of these problems Catherine turned to the Duke of Nevers, whom she had at last brought back to good-humored loyalty to the King. He was put in charge of Picardy, and although he shrank from the task, Catherine wrote and induced him to go into the province to persuade its nobility and burghers to give up the leagues they were forming and have but "one faith, one King, and one law." A month later he had apparently accomplished this mission to her satisfaction.[2]

In the end of May Catherine met the members of the house of Guise at Rheims. There was a long series of complaints to be settled on both sides. They had not yet surrendered certain towns which they had agreed to surrender two years before, but were even demanding others, and they were apparently encouraging the formation of anti-royal leagues and associations. On the other hand they claimed that the King had not paid them the wages of the garrisons he had promised to maintain for them in the cautionary towns they held and that he was making friends with the Huguenots at the instigation of the Duke of Epernon. Besides a private war was going on, entirely without the command of the King, which was very much like the

[1] Letts. IX, 183, 196; B. N. It. 1735, Jan. 16; Journal, Michel de la Riche, pntd. Rev. des Q. Hists. 36, p. 496.
[2] Neg. Tosc., IV, 685; Letts. IX, 203, 220.

feudal struggles of past centuries. The Duke of Bouillon, an independent ruler of a small state on the borders of Germany and France, under the protection of the French Crown, was a Protestant and gave a refuge for Huguenot exiles within his dominions. The chiefs of the League had decided, the preceding fall, that he should be destroyed and his two strong cities of Sedan and Jametz garrisoned by the League, in order to bar completely the road for the entry of Huguenot auxiliary forces from Germany. By the end of the year the war, which was practically a war between the Duke of Guise and the Duke of Bouillon, was openly waged. The lack of money of the Duke of Guise, however, soon reduced it to a series of pillaging raids and ineffective sieges in which no one suffered except the poor peasant of the countryside and the King, whose orders to make peace were disregarded.

Catherine spent about a month in negotiations with the Guise almost as fruitless as those she had carried on with the King of Navarre and then returned to Paris with an appearance of agreement which deceived no one. The truth was that, behind the formal complaints of either side of which I have only suggested specimens, there was a definite conspiracy between the family of Guise and the King of Spain to get control of France with the aid of a huge subsidy from Spain, Spanish troops from the Netherlands and levies from the Catholic cantons of Switzerland. Although the King did not know this he felt sure that the Guise were his mortal foes. Catherine was therefore unable to get any concessions from the Guise or to induce them to give up their war with the Duke of Bouillon, whose quarrel was now openly espoused by the Dukes of Montpensier and Epernon.[1]

Indeed there was a considerable body of the nobility that was disposed to rally to the King. For example: The royal lieutenants came up from Dauphiny with a list of names of gentlemen who declared that they belonged neither to

[1] B. N. It. 1736, July 16; de Croze, pntd. II, 283.

Navarre nor to the League, but only to the King. They begged permission, if the King could not make either peace or war, to make their own peace with the Huguenots of the province. A body of noblemen also assembled in Normandy around the Duke of Montpensier and the brothers of the Prince of Condé sent word to the King that they were in arms to obey his orders, although they believed in the right of the members of the House of Bourbon to succeed to the throne. A year before the strange situation at Court was briefly characterized by the Nuncio, "All are enemies and hide it and make a show of friendship. Each tries to fool his neighbors and thinks he can do it and the worst fooled of all is the King." He now described it more at length:

"Here there is war within and without—religious factions—political factions—Catholics and Protestants—Politiques and Leaguers. . . . The hate of the people for the government is great and the King, in spite of his power, is poor and his prodigality makes him poorer. He shows remarkable piety and at the same time detests the Holy League. He is about to make war on the heretics and is jealous of the success of the Catholics. He wants the defeat of the heretics and is also afraid to have them defeated. He fears the defeat of the Catholics and desires it. These conflicting feelings make him distrust his own thoughts. He does not believe in himself but all his trust is in d'Epernon. The jealousy of the latter for Guise is turned to hate and the poison has spread to the King's heart. . . . Guise is adored by the people but hated by the King, while the King loves d'Epernon, whom the people hate." [1]

In this strange position, threatened with foreign invasion and inward rebellion and more afraid of many of his apparently zealous supporters than of his most pronounced rebels, the King fell into great distress of mind. Often in the middle of the night he went to his mother's room and held long consultations with one or two intimates. In these he finally determined to send the Duke

[1] B. N. It. June 19, Sept. 3; Neg. Tosc. IV, 697; Arch. Vat. 18, 27 Oct., 1586; l'Epinois qtd., 81.

of Joyeuse with a moderate force against the King of Navarre, to leave the Duke of Guise, not too well supported, to oppose the invasion of the German mercenaries and to muster the largest army, between these two, under his own command. His opinion was that the Germans and Guise would exhaust each other's strength, while, in the event of the Guise being too badly defeated, he would have forces on foot to prevent disaster. He was often heard in his restless striding to and fro murmuring to himself, "De inimicis meis vindicabo inimicos meos." With part of this plan Catherine was not at all in accord. She did not want the King to put his life in peril by taking the field himself, and after he had reached the front she was filled with fears for him, writing to the Duke of Montpensier "to guard the King's safety as well as his honor." [1]

In September, 1587, he went, with the Duke of Nevers and three of the marshals of France, to join the army. Before starting, he called a meeting of Parlement and the municipal council of Paris and made his mother regent of the kingdom, charging them to guard the peace and to prevent disorder. He left with Catherine as counsellors the Cardinals of Bourbon and Vendôme, the Chancellor, her right-hand man, Bellièvre, and one of the foreign secretaries.[2]

[1] Davila, III, pt. 2, pp. 87-89; Letts. IX, 244.
[2] A. N. K. 1565, Sept. 12; B. N. It. 1736, Sept. 14.

CHAPTER XLII

CATHERINE AGAIN REGENT. HER PERSONAL AFFAIRS

Catherine took up her work as regent with all her old energy. Her surviving letters show the greatest activity in sending men through the country to collect food. She rushed forward tents and gathered artillery trains and uniforms. She was urgent in assembling and dispatching reinforcements and in hastening through her agents the arrival of the royal German mercenaries. She was very alert in guarding against an attack from the rear by the Huguenots, now writing to take precautions against danger in Brittany from a fleet which was hovering off the coast, now ordering companies of gendarmes to stay in Normandy because of rumors of a threatened insurrection there, now ordering all the wells of a region where water was scarce to be spoiled in order to check the advance of the Huguenots from the south. In the defense of the capital of Normandy, Rouen, Catherine had to use her authority, because the richer inhabitants were forcing the poorer folk to do all the guard duty in spite of the need of their daily wages for their families. Catherine pointed out that, at Paris, even members of the royal council were not exempt from guard duty and ordered that a general roster should be made and strictly followed. When the German auxiliaries of the Huguenots were threatening invasion, she carried out rapidly the orders to collect all the grain in the country through which they would pass and bring it to strongly fortified cities, made ready to throw the millwheels of all grist mills into the rivers, to destroy the windmills, dismantle the forges and remove all anvils and all available salt.

The most difficult task she had was to supply money. The chamber of accounts did not want to pass the edict

levying new taxes and the city of Paris was very slow in paying the amount the King tried to get from them. Catherine was almost discouraged over the task of collecting quickly so huge a sum as was necessary for the payment of the army, because "money has never been so dear nor so hard to collect as it is now in this city." As usual, the best chance the government had to get ready cash was from the Church and, as usual, the Church did not want to give what they were asked to give, even for war against the heretics. Catherine wrote that the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Bishop of Paris were doing everything in their power to get the clergy to vote a big subsidy, but the dioceses were very reluctant either to grant or to pay and she was afraid it would be a long time before they could get much money.[1]

Two even more delicate matters she had to handle,—delicate because they concerned a danger to the King which must be prevented without being openly recognized.

The Huguenot German mercenaries on their march into France plundered a part of the Duchy of Lorraine and Guise wrote to a friend: "The Duke of Lorraine, since his chickens have been eaten, will sell them dear, and if the reiters stop in his territories long enough for his forces to come up, he will make them give back the feathers." [2] The reiters did not stop but moved on into France and the Duke of Lorraine, widower of Claude de Valois, sister of Henry III, wrote offering to join the Duke of Guise with about 6,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry (Italian and German mercenaries and native troops) to attack them. Henry III, whose suspicion of the entire Lorraine family was continually deepening, although he did not yet know of the treaty they had made with Philip II at Joinville, sent two messengers to forbid the entrance into France of the army of Lorraine, unless its men would take an oath of military allegiance to him through his officers. But the Duke

[1] Letts. IX, 238, 248.
[2] Puchesse (3), qtd.

marched across the border in spite of this prohibition, sending a messenger to his brother-in-law and a letter to his mother-in-law to explain his conduct. The King was infuriated and disposed to refuse this important reinforcement. Catherine shared his dislike of the conduct of the Duke of Lorraine, which she called "so hard to bear and of such evil consequence that all the world would blame it," but she perceived at once the delicacy of the situation. She did not dare to write freely to the King, because her letter to him was to be carried by a gentleman of Lorraine who would doubtless read it. So she wrote to her son's favorite secretary, Villeroy, telling him to show the King her long letter. The gist of it is that he had better yield the point, trust the Duke and act as if the Lorraine army had come into France by royal orders. Otherwise, if Guise should be defeated by the reiters, all France would accuse him of having favored the heretics.

She evidently felt it was rather dangerous for her to give this advice, for the suspicion was already rife that she was willing, to some extent, to maintain the rivalry of the Guise with the King in order to play her old game of maintaining her own authority by acting as the balance between two opposed parties. It was even whispered around that, if her son died without direct heirs, Catherine might be more than willing to see the succession go in the direction of the house of Guise rather than to Henry of Navarre and the Bourbons. These suspicions seem to have been false, but the following passages from Catherine's letter shows that she was dimly aware of them and feared the effect of such ideas in her son's mind. "I don't want to say anything about this directly to the King, but I write to you. Sometimes the King doesn't take my word according to my intention and thinks that I'm trying to palliate everything, either because I love the Guise, which is as much as to say that I love anything in the world as much as I do him, which is very hard for me to bear, or because he thinks I am a poor creature ruled by weak goodness." In the

midst of this troublesome situation Catherine heard a rumor that the Duke of Guise was coming to Paris. She went at once to his wife and told her very frankly that he must not come at this time, because it would be sure to make trouble. The Duchess agreed and said he had not thought of coming. His cousin the Duke of Aumale, however, did come with a strong escort and wanted Catherine to give him an audience. She sent back word that he ought never to have come and must leave as soon as possible; to which he replied: "that he had come not to take the city, but simply to order his spring clothes." [1]

Catherine was also very much troubled by the preparations which Spain was making to put to sea a huge fleet—the Great Armada. She knew from her spies that the Prince of Parma was assembling munitions of war in the Netherlands, close to the borders of Picardy and she thought it probable that the object of the Armada was to attack England or at least to drive the English from the Netherlands, but she felt that "very often such preparations are only made to fool those who are looking on . . . so that it will be a good thing to take pains to find out what is the real object of that great Spanish army." She was not the only person who suspected that the real object of Philip in putting into being the "largest fleet" that had ever sailed the waters of Western Europe, might be to make a descent, not upon England, but upon France. She tried to get information in a somewhat roundabout way, by having one of her confidants make suggestions to the Nuncio which caused him to ask an audience of her. She then said to him that the union of Rome, Spain and France was to her mind the only remedy for the weakness of the plan to attack England. Her son was very anxious to attack England in conjunction with Spain, but could not do so unless he had peace. When the Nuncio replied that peace ought to mean the suppression of the Huguenots, she said yes, but that the Huguenots

[1] Letts. IX, 279; Arch. Vat. Fr. I, 4, 12 Oct., 22 Nov.; B. N. It. 1736, Oct. 23; Puchesse (9) ctd., p. 15.

were helped by Germany and England, the faction of Guise by Spain and the King by no one.[1] This shrewd trick to get definite information from the Nuncio failed, chiefly because he did not have any information to give.[2]

Of course Catherine never had any intention of helping Spain to increase its power by the destruction of England. It was the opinion of the best observers, like the Venetian Ambassador, that England could take care of herself without outside help. He wrote in the spring of 1588:

"It is commonly thought that, in spite of all her preparations, Spain will not attack England because the King knows full well how much the English fleet is to be feared; not only for its numbers, but also because the English . . . have the reputation of the best sailors in the world and of great fighters at sea. The English fleet is waiting for the Spaniards and, if the battle comes off, it is generally believed that, fighting for their country, their faith and their children, they will stand to it with the obstinacy they are wont to show and, after the battle, it is highly improbable that the Spaniards . . . would be able to land upon the shores of England in a condition to overcome the resistance they would meet there." [2]

Catherine was soon to learn that the sailing of the Armada did have a direct relation to the safety of France, but Philip's game was very much more subtle than the one she suspected as a possibility.

The fortunes of the three campaigns carried on in the name of the King varied. In the south, the Duke of Joyeuse was utterly defeated by Henry of Navarre at Coutras, the first pitched battle won by the Huguenots in the whole series of wars. Joyeuse and the greater part of the nobles who accompanied him fell and his army was utterly destroyed. Catherine mourned over this "great misfortune," but eight days later she got better news from the north. The Duke of Guise by a night attack on the headquarters of the German auxiliaries of the Huguenots in the large

[1] Letts. IX, 271, 300; B. N. It. 1736, Nov. 9; Neg. Tosc. IV, 737, 746; Arch. Vat. Fr. I, B. 4, Aug. 17.
[2] B. N. It. 1737, App. 8.

village of Vimory, gained some slight advantage at first, but was finally checked and the surprise ended with about equal losses on both sides. He never lost an opportunity either to fight or to make the most of any success won by fighting and the action was immediately reported at Paris and at Rome as a considerable victory, in which he had cut to pieces more than a thousand of the enemy and taken a large part of their train. It was hailed with Te Deums at Rome and with great rejoicing among the population of Paris, but judicious people soon came to find out that it was, as the Tuscan Ambassador wrote, only a "vittorietta." A month later, in the end of November, Guise won a very much more important success at Auneau. Taking skilful advantage of a slight negligence of his opponent, he attacked the Germans laden with booty, killed two thousand of them, including camp followers, took four hundred prisoners and captured seven flags.[1]

The great bulk of the Huguenot auxiliary army, eight thousand mounted Germans and twenty thousand Swiss infantry, aided by twenty-five hundred French, was not affected seriously by this local action. These were conquered, through diplomacy rather than arms, by the Dukes of Nevers and Epernon. The Swiss, when they found themselves actually in the presence of the King, had lowered their pikes with reverence and sent deputies to say that they had not come to fight against him, but simply to defend the succession to the throne. It was not too difficult to persuade them to go home, leaving their standards and guns behind them, on condition that their wages should be paid. The royal troops, taking advantage of the confusion produced among the Germans by this defection, fell upon them, took a large number of prisoners and all their artillery. Terribly harassed by the King's troops hanging on their flanks and rear, their horses worn out and in want of provisions, they finally agreed to march out of France with

[1] Letts. IX, 264, 312; B. N. It. 1736, 5, 20, 25 Nov.; Neg. Tosc. IV, 731; de Thou, VII, 34, 40.

their banners flying, but under an oath never to serve in it again without the permission of the King.[1] The news of this almost bloodless victory brought great delight to Catherine, who saw in it the hand of God working "what is really a miracle, the defeat of an army of thirty thousand men with so little loss." The King himself said "it was the work of God and not of man" and was present at the solemn Te Deum in Notre Dame the day before Christmas, 1587. But, with all his piety, his confidence in the Duke of Epernon, who had been the intermediary in the negotiations, was still further increased. The people of Paris, however, did not share his confidence. It was said on the streets that, if Guise had been in the place of Epernon, the reiters, instead of being escorted across the borders, would have been entirely destroyed. Peddlers appeared through the streets crying for sale books which bore the title "Martial Deeds of the Duke of Epernon Against the Heretics," but all the pages were blank except for the single word in large type, "Rien." [2]

Another effort was made to heal this quarrel between Epernon and the Guise and Catherine was the most active in trying to make a reconciliation with the aid of the Nuncio. This exposed her again to the suspicion of her son that she was overfriendly to the Guise and caused him to withdraw somewhat from her counsel and intimacy. When the King came back to Paris at Christmas time, he found his mother ill in bed and the council was held every day in her room. When her son showed marked coldness of manner, her illness visibly increased and no less than three shrewd observers attributed the rapid deterioration in her health to chagrin, but she succeeded in conquering this fresh suspicion and persuaded the King of the necessity of urging Epernon to be reconciled with the Guise. At the suggestion of the Nuncio, Epernon made a humble submis-

[1] De Thou, VII, 17, 45; Neg. Tosc. IV, 704; B. N. It. 1736, 9, 16, 28 Nov.

[2] Letts. IX, 312; Neg. Tosc. IV, 742; B. N. Port. Font. 7753 f. 174, 268; Arch. Vat. 27 Dec., 1587.

sion to Catherine herself, kneeling before her with his hat in his hand and remaining in that position for an hour, in spite of her request to get up. He assured her that he had never acted in any way against her interest, that he was ready for all the rest of his life to be her faithful dependent and that he would do, in the matter of reconciliation with Guise, anything she asked.[1]

The outcome of these efforts was not at all what their authors expected because the Guise failed to reciprocate. The Nuncio became completely disgusted, saying that he did not believe they wanted an agreement in order to attack the heretics, but were remaining in arms in the hope of gaining more cities for their party. In the end, he adds, "they will become intolerable and the King will be forced to fight." Catherine continued to plead for a conciliating attitude towards them. When Epernon advised the King to arm in order to be ready to fight either the heretics or the Guise as need might be, she fell into a passion of anger and accused him of being a Huguenot. Epernon denied it, pointing out that no one of his family had ever been anything but orthodox, but Catherine was not placated and kept repeating that she was the "Queen Mother of the King and that there was no one who had more interest in the service of the King than his own mother, adding many threatening words to Epernon." [2]

In this last year of her life, Catherine was able to arrange what she thought a happy ending to a long, dragging family litigation which had worried her for years. After the murder of her illegitimate half-brother, Alexander, the first Duke of Florence, Catherine claimed to be the heir-in-chief of the Medici family fortune—"the inheritance of Cosimo" as it was called. But she had been obliged to fight in the Italian courts the claims of Alexander's widow, Margaret, Duchess of Parma. She was that illegitimate daugh-

[1] Arch. Vat. Morosini, 22 Jan., 8 Feb., 1588, ib. f. 23; B. N. It. 2004, Jan. 5, Feb. 12, 26, Mar. 11; A. N. K. 1568 f. 8.
[2] Arch. Vat. 27, Mar. 7; B. N. It. 1737, Apr. 22.

ter of the Emperor Charles V, who had brought as part of her dowry the loan of Spanish troops to crush the successful attempt to revive the liberties of Florence. In 1559 the Papal court had given a decision favorable to Catherine's claims, but to avoid further legal entanglements and the possible reversal of the judgment, she had made a more or less forced compromise with her sister-in-law in regard to the use of the property, handing over to Margaret for her lifetime the Roman palace of her first husband. After the death of the Duchess of Parma, Cardinal Farnese, her brother-in-law by her second marriage, had proposed a final settlement of the interminable process, which Catherine was willing to accept, but it had not been so easy to bring the Duke of Florence to an acceptable agreement. After more than a year of correspondence, the best Catherine could get had been an offer that he should keep all the property she claimed in Tuscany and in exchange wipe off his books two hundred thousand écus which he claimed she owed him. To this obliging offer Catherine replied that she would be glad to hand over to him all her estates in Tuscany in exchange for three hundred and forty thousand écus in cash and the canceling of a debt of forty thousand écus, which the King, her son, really owed the Grand Duke. She added that this was giving him the property at a hundred thousand écus less than it was worth. He also wanted to be made heir of the Medici palace at Rome. Catherine had given it to the Crown as a residence for the French Ambassador and declared it was impossible to recall her gift.[1]

The long chaffering which ensued was taken up the next year by the brother and successor of the Grand Duke, but before the close of the year 1587 an idea had come to Catherine which promised an easy way out of the legal struggle—and it was her favorite solution for all difficulties—a marriage. She had found some consolation for her affliction over the attitude of her only surviving daughter in her care for her oldest granddaughter, child of her oldest daughter,

[1] Riess, 293; Letts. IX, 199; B. N. It. 2004, Jan. 5. See N.

Claude, first Duchess of Lorraine. For some years the young girl had always been with her and Catherine had considered many marriages for her. The match upon which she had at first set her heart was with the son of her old friend, the Duchess of Nemours, formerly the Duchess of Guise. She wrote: "You who know how much I loved my husband, cannot doubt that I love everything that comes from his children more than I do myself and this child I have brought up—the greatest contentment I can have before dying is to see her happily married." A little later, when she had obtained the consent of the child's father, and of the King, she wrote to the Duchess of Nemours: "So we don't need anything more except your presence and him whom you will bring with you to make us all dance." This marriage which Catherine had planned with so much pleasure was never made, and the Duke of Savoy, a close relative of the young man, angrily accused Catherine of breaking it off to make a more advantageous match—an accusation entirely true. For Catherine now conceived the idea of marrying the girl to the Grand Duke of Florence. She sent for the Duchess of Nemours and said her son must not expect to marry the Princess of Lorraine, because she had another match in mind for her granddaughter, but she made the Duchess a present of a hundred thousand scudi to cover the money the house of Nemours had already spent in anticipation of the marriage. The Duchess felt very badly about it, but was obliged to give way, and, with the assistance of the Pope, Catherine finally succeeded in engaging her favorite granddaughter to the Grand Duke of Florence by promising a dot of six hundred thousand crowns, including all her property in Tuscany and her claims upon the Duchy of Urbino.[1]

Catherine arranged another matter at the beginning of 1588 which must have given her great pleasure. She had always retained grateful memories of the Convent of the

[1] Letts. VIII, 252, 277, 313, 372; Davillé, 171; B. N. It. 2004, Feb. 12, ib. 1737, Apr. 8; Arch. Vat. 27 f. 48, Vol. 24 f. 204; Neg. Tosc. IV, 707, 757.

Murate at Florence, where she had stayed as a girl, and she had showed her gratitude by substantial gifts to them. She now arranged with the Grand Duke to lower their taxes and so increase their income from her benefactions. She had promised them her statue also, but she wrote saying that this would be too difficult to arrange and that she was having her portrait painted to send them instead. The tapestry which she sent about the same time to the sister of the Pope, whose Nuncio was helping to force a reconciliation between the Duke of Guise, the idol of the people of Paris, and the Duke of Epernon, the favorite of the King, was the outcome of a gratitude which looked more to favors to come than to favors already received.[1]

During nearly thirty years when Catherine as Queen Mother had been either Regent of France or chief counsellor of her sons, the situation of the kingdom had never been more dangerous. The Crown was caught between the upper and nether millstones: there was Henry of Navarre, backed by the Huguenots of the south, and the Politiques who followed Montmorency, and there was the Duke of Guise, backed by the family of Lorraine and the King of Spain and head of the League, which was strong among the nobles of Picardy, Normandy and Champagne, in many of the cities north of the Loire and had adherents all over France. The case was not indeed desperate. The Pope was suspicious of the motives of the family of Lorraine. Many of the great Catholic nobles like the Duke of Montpensier and the Duke of Nevers and a body of the orthodox gentry, shared these suspicions. But the King had no gifts for winning popularity and of the two young men he had raised as pillars of his throne, the Duke of Joyeuse had recently been killed at the Huguenot victory of Coutras and the Duke of Epernon was detested by the people and by the nobles outside of the adherents he had raised to power.

The Lorraine faction held a family council in the city of Nancy in the end of January, 1588. There were present the

[1] Letts. IX, 321.

Duke of Lorraine and his son, the Duke of Guise, his brother, the Duke of Mayenne, his cousins, the Dukes of Aumale and Elbeuf, his half-brother, the Duke of Nemours, and a few of their most trusted adherents. We do not know what more violent plans may have been discussed (though there is reason to suspect that they were discussed), but the results of the Conference have survived in the Eleven Articles of Nancy presented to the King. These requested that the King should more openly and strongly support the League for the supression of heresy and should remove from his council men of whom a list would be furnished. The decrees of the Council of Trent were to be put in force and a tribunal of the Inquisition established; at least in the capital of every province. The clergy must be allowed to buy back the lands they had sold to pay subsidies. All who had been heretics since 1560 must give a third and all Catholics a tenth of their property to carry on the war against the Huguenots. All Huguenot property must be sold; though Catholic relatives were to have the first chance to buy it in at a reduced price. All heretic prisoners must be put to death unless they embraced Catholicism, paid a fine of all their property and agreed to serve in the war three years without pay. All money so raised was to be used to pay the debts contracted by the leaders of the League to support the war. These chiefs were to hold not only the towns already put in their hands by the Treaty of Nemours, but additional cities with permission to build citadels and garrison them with troops paid by taxes levied according to their judgment on the cities and the surrounding country.[1]

The audacity of the faction of the nobility which made these demands had behind it three sources of support—the Duke of Lorraine stood by the younger branch of the family because he desired to conquer and add to Lorraine the domains of the Duke of Bouillon, who had just died leaving a young girl as heiress. A large part of the clergy,

[1] Mem. Ligue, II, 269.

together with the people of Paris and other cities, had lost confidence in the King's will or ability to suppress heresy and wanted a change in government with a vague hope of bettering their condition. The money of the faction came from Spain and Philip II, who was about ready to launch the Great Armada against England, wanted to make sure that when the movement came the King of France could not aid Elizabeth.

The King received the Eleven Articles of Nancy with no outward sign of anger and deferred his answer.

By the middle of April he knew the ground was mined beneath his feet and that the populace of Paris was thoroughly organized into a vast conspiracy and ready to rise in arms. This had been done by Guise through the skill of some twelve or fifteen of his officers and adherents (de Thou gives the names of ten) acting in concert with burghers of great popular influence, though for the most part not magistrates. Full knowledge of the method of organization had now come to the King from Nicolas Poulain, Lieutenant of the Provostry of the Isle de France, who after serving the plans of the League for many months betrayed them and continued in their employ as a secret royal agent. In addition to what he was told had been done secretly, the King knew that the majority of the preachers of the city were openly in favor of the League and did all they could to promote it.[1]

That this conspiracy was directed against the Duke of Epernon he knew and he was informed by Poulain, who was present at the most secret conferences of the conspirators, that they had planned not only to kill the Duke but to seize the King—once when he went out masked according to his habit during Mardi Gras, once when he was returning with a small escort from the château of Vincennes in the suburbs and once by assault on the Louvre itself. Henry listened to these warnings enough to balk the plans, but

[1] De Thou VII, 183.

he seemed scarcely to credit the information brought him so fully by Poulain.

In face of what the Tuscan Ambassador described as "one of the largest revolts and rebellions ever heard of, which will, I fear, compel me within a month to write you of most extraordinary events," the King took no steps against the conspirators whose names he knew. His only vigorous action was to forbid Guise peremptorily to come to Paris. In this waiting on events he seems to have been encouraged by Catherine, for in a midnight conference for which he awakened her, she said, "Don't stir up a hornets' nest without having your face covered." It was finally decided to send Epernon into Normandy to make sure of Rouen, the second city of the kingdom, and to collect troops.[1]

[1] De Thou, VII, 182; Davila, III, pt. 2, pp. 171, 174, 191; Neg. Tosc. IV, 775.

CHAPTER XLIII

GUISE "KING OF PARIS"

Guise was not disposed to imitate the King by waiting long on events. He had been frequently urged to come to Paris by the council of the League and had refused, spending his time in securing control by the partisans of the League of cities not far from Paris: Melun, Meaux, Château-Thierry, etc., but about midday on the ninth of May, 1588, he rode into Paris with a very small suite of only nine people. Word of his arrival was quickly circulated by his soldiers, who had been dribbling into the city for weeks until they were estimated by the Tuscan Ambassador at two thousand. Before he was half across the city a crowd of thirty thousand was at his heels and he could scarcely make his way through the streets because the people crowded so upon him, crying "Vive Guise," trying to shake hands with him and kissing the hem of his cloak as if he were a saint, while from the windows the women rained flowers in his path. He went straight, without dismounting at his house, to the palace of Catherine.[1]

The astonished Queen Mother received him pale and with marks of excitement not usual with her except when under the pressure of grief she had no motive to conceal. She showed no anger to the Duke but asked why he had come against the commands of the King. Was it to present a petition against d'Epernon? The Duke replied he was no *maitre de requestes.* He wore a sword to get satisfaction from those who insulted him. To the King he wished to justify his conduct against the slanders circulated against him. While Guise was following the custom of saluting the ladies of her suite, Catherine sent to the Louvre her gentle-

[1] Neg. Tosc. 771, 779; Davila, III, pt. 2, p. 183.

man of honor, Luigi Davila, relative of Davila the historian, then a page of Catherine from whom we have these details, to warn the King. Henry summoned his three closest councillors to his cabinet and sat for a while, his face covered with his hands, leaning on the table. One of the officers of his bodyguard, an Italian, advised inviting Guise to the Louvre and killing him as soon as he entered. But the Chancellor and two of his civilian councillors, afraid that the people of Paris might storm the Louvre, advised against it. Meanwhile Guise, on foot alongside the litter of Catherine, was coming, through a vast crowd, to the palace. He entered and passed through the Swiss, French and Scotch guards of the King a little pale, but smiling and saluting at every step as if he were among friends. The King received him frowning, and asked why he had come to Paris against his direct commands. The Duke, with great respect, replied, "To justify myself," and added that he had not received positive and clear commands. "What!" said the King, turning to Bellièvre, "Did you not deliver my message?" Then stopping Bellièvre when he commenced to speak, the King, as if weary of this verbal fencing, turned to the Duke and said no one had calumniated him. Things looked stormy and here Catherine, following her natural inclination against violence, drew the King aside and warned him of the great mass of armed people she had seen in passing through the streets. Guise, taking advantage of the King's hesitation, said he was tired by his journey and bowed his way out of the palace. It is small wonder that having thus braved the King and escaped unharmed he became reckless and scornful of any danger from him.[1]

No sooner was he gone than Nicolas Poulain, who had been kept waiting in an antechamber, was brought into the King's cabinet. He offered again, if the King would arrest the burgher leaders of the conspiracy, to force them to confess. But Henry, under the influence of Catherine, refused to employ violent means and preferred forming a force

[1] Arch. Vat. 27, Nuncio, May 10; Davila, IV, 184; de l'Estoile, III, 136.

among the Parisians of the higher and middle classes which might be depended upon to side with his guards if it came to a fight. Five companies were formed under the command of the father of the historian de Thou and ordered to stand under arms all night in the cemetery of the Innocents; but four of them left the cemetery and registered their approval of the League by taking post against orders in the streets. All that night there was little sleep in the Louvre, the palace of Catherine, or the family hotel of the Guise in the heart of the city. The next afternoon but one, the King met Guise in Catherine's garden and talked long with him. Guise went back with the King to the royal palace and served at dinner as Grand Master of the King's Household.[1]

It had been agreed in this conference that all non-citizens should leave Paris. But when the agents of the King began (11 May) to carry out these orders, it was evident that the city authorities would do nothing. A force of four thousand Swiss was not far from the gates and the King, after a conference at which Catherine was not present, ordered them into the city and commanded all loyal gentlemen, the archers of the Scotch guard, the Swiss royal guards and the French royal guards under Crillon to stand to arms in the palace. The Guisards immediately spread through the city the report that the King had ordered the summary execution of one hundred and twenty of the most devoted of the Leaguers, including the chief popular preachers who had for months been attacking the King and praising the Guise as the defenders of religion. On the morning of May twelfth, an hour before daylight, the Swiss entered the gate, drums beating and Marshal Biron at their head. The King met them on horseback and as they filed past repeatedly ordered the companies and their leaders not to attack the citizens in any way. As soon as it was day Catherine sent her cavalier of honor, bearing a complimentary message to Guise, to spy out and report what was going on. He

[1] Davila, III, pt. 2, pp. 188, 190; Arch. Vat. 27, Nuncio, May 12.

found the palace of the Guise like the headquarters of an army filled with captains coming and going, taking orders from the Duke, great piles of arms, and all the court filled with guards.

Meanwhile Guise had sent word to the Nuncio begging him to go and see the King and beg him not to be the cause of a great slaughter by sending troops into the city. He went and urged the King not "to ruin the most beautiful city in the world and cause much innocent blood to be shed." The King thanked him and said he meant no harm to any one but only to expel strangers from the city and stop rebellion. The Nuncio then went to Catherine, who said, "I ought to know that all resolutions of the King in these days had been formed without her knowledge and she had only been informed of them on waking by Bellièvre; that she was extremely hurt by her son's mistrust of her and would avenge herself on those who were the cause of it." She praised the advice the Nuncio had given to the King and was sorry she could not help him to urge it on her son because "she had resolved not to speak to him on the subject." [1] Catherine evidently soon recovered from this pique, for she had herself carried to the Louvre in her sedan and her messenger to Guise coming there reported that in crossing the city he had seen all the shops closed and every sign of a general muster in arms and preparations to barricade.

Meanwhile the royal forces, nearly six thousand men, had been split up by order of the King, into seven bodies, with orders to seize and hold the chief bridges and squares. The consequence was that chains began to be stretched across the streets, barricades sprang up rapidly and the higher stories of houses on the streets near the troops were filled with stones, while the windows of those which directly commanded their posts were filled with harquebusiers. The royal captains sent repeatedly to the Louvre to report what was going on and to demand permission to charge and clear the streets and menacing houses while there was yet time,

[1] Arch. Vat. Morosini, May 12.

but always the King sent back word to stand on the defensive, while Catherine insisted to the messengers that they must on no account use any violence against the people. Between whiles she paid a visit to Guise in his palace begging him to leave the city, a request which he pretended to be inclined to grant. By midday the streets were filled with successive barricades at distances of about a hundred feet and the scattered bodies of soldiers were helpless at their posts. Summoned to lay down their arms, most of them did so, and the people, triumphing because they had vindicated against the King their ancient privilege to have no foreign troops in the city, held the Swiss at their mercy. The only body of royal troops that could possibly defend itself was the strong garrison kept in the Louvre.

Then Guise appeared as the master of the storm. Riding out from his palace with nothing but a baton in his hand, he passed through the crowded streets, everywhere greeted with acclamations, and exhorted the people to show no violence. Going from one post to another, he ordered their arms returned to the Swiss and the French royal guards and then sent them back to the Louvre, each body under the safe conduct of one of his captains; the troops marching with silent drums, arms trailing and helmets off like prisoners. At the new market whence the Swiss were withdrawn by order of the King under Marshals Biron and d'Aumont without the assistance of Guise or any of his officers, the crowd attacked the rear of the column in the streets and killed sixty men with stones and harquebus balls. This was the famous day of the Barricades which left Guise King of Paris and justified the Spanish Ambassador in writing in triumph over his success: "The plans of the Guise will make it certain that the King of France will have his hands so tied before the Armada sails that it will be impossible for him even in words, still less by deeds, to help the Queen of England." [1]

After having thus proved his power, Guise waited for

[1] Pntd. de Croze, II, 330.

the King to make the next move, feeling sure that he must offer a virtual surrender to all demands made upon him. In his youth Henry III had joined Henry of Guise in persuading his brother, Charles IX, to loose on their common enemy, the Huguenots, the populace of Paris and now the associate of his boyhood had turned the same terrible force against him. Apparently there was nothing left but to negotiate, and the King turned to his mother, in this the most difficult position of his life, as to his best friend. After many deliberations in the royal cabinet, Catherine sent to ask of the commanders of the citizens in arms a pass to the palace of Guise. They sent word she could not come in her carriage because of the barricades, but that she might come on foot. She started therefore in her sedan with a small suite of gentlemen. The barricades were opened before her and closed behind her so that it took two hours to reach the end of her journey. She was met at the outset by the reproaches of Guise against the King for bringing a foreign garrison into Paris and so arousing the suspicions of the people that he meant to arrest and put to death many good Catholics. Catherine gave a soft answer and they adjourned to the garden, where Guise sketched the terms on which he would make peace.[1]

Catherine returned to the Louvre after night had fallen and the councillors of the King were of three minds: one party wished to grant all the demands of Guise, another to refuse them all at any risk, while Catherine characteristically wished neither to accept nor to refuse but to negotiate. The next morning after mass, Catherine and the King in secret conference determined that Catherine should again visit Guise and that during their discussion the King should abandon the Louvre and go to Chartres. This plan was easily carried out. The King went to walk in the garden at the Tuileries, strolled into the stables, mounted with sixteen gentlemen and officials of the court and rode out of a postern gate. A little way outside he found the Swiss, who

[1] De l'Estoile, Davila.

accompanied him for a distance and then marching in his rear barred the road to pursuit. It was two hours before one of the gentlemen of Guise whispered in his ear as he was still discussing with Catherine, that the King had escaped from the Louvre. He at once turned in anger on Catherine, who, pretending to be surprised, said she did not believe the King had left. Getting into her chair, she went at once to the Louvre and, finding that the French guard had just started, sent word after them to march all night until they overtook the King.[1]

Both Guise and the King were much blamed by their contemporaries for the successive blunders they made in policy during these four days when Guise drove the King in flight from his own palace. Pasquier, whose sympathies were rather with the League, points out the "heavy and inexcusable faults of both sides." Pope Sixtus V called Guise a reckless fool to have put himself the first day in the hands of the King he was insulting and the King a coward to let him go untouched. Guise was above all blamed for letting the King escape from the Louvre. But an attack upon the palace, or even an investment of it, would have meant risking a battle in the open between the city militia and the highly trained royal guards backed by four thousand Swiss, the best infantry in the world and led by two Marshals of France. Guise was too much of a soldier not to know the risk of that. As for the King, certainly it is not easy to think of his father, Henry II, and impossible to think of his successor, Henry IV, letting an insulting rebel walk out of his presence untouched or sending an army into a rebellious city with orders not to use their arms. But Henry the Third had drifted with events so long that it was hard for him to try to master them. Although Catherine complained to the Nuncio that she had no influence over him, she really, perhaps without his being conscious of it, controlled him. She had never done anything but temporize with a bad situation except once in her life and the outcome

[1] Davila, III, 212.

of St. Bartholomew did not suggest that it was wise to cut the gordian knot.[1]

The flight of the King left her to represent the Crown at Paris, which, so far as the King's authority was concerned, was like a foreign city. Guise seized the château of Vincennes, the Arsenal and the Bastille, whose governor surrendered without firing a shot. He then formally displaced all captains of the city militia and all magistrates who showed the least respect for the royal authority and replaced them by extreme Leaguers.[2]

In her attempts to negotiate with Guise for some sort of an accommodation, Catherine was much aided by the Nuncio, who was shocked by the openly circulated reports that the real designs of Guise had been to form a council of the nobles of his party and forcibly retire the King to a monastery as not fit to govern. The King knew of this common report and often burst out in anger. "The Duke of Guise wants to take me prisoner and I know it from one who was present when the plot was made. I wear a sword always. I will never fall alive into his hands. The first who comes near me dies. When I die, I die King of France." But aside from words he did nothing to recover his authority and finally sent to his mother full powers to conclude peace with Paris and the leaders of the League. She acted entirely on the favorite maxim of her politics, "Time brings often more things than one would think and those are praised who know how to yield to save themselves." But while she waited on time she did not waste time. More than half the total of her scanty correspondence which has survived from the last year of her life (about a hundred letters) are the pages she wrote or dictated between May 14th and August 1st, and they give a picture of incessant activity. She had repeated interviews with everybody who might be friend or foe, Guise and his adherents, the members of the Parlement of Paris, leading

[1] Pasquier Lv. XII, 5, B. N. fds. fr. qtd. d'Ars, 226; Arch. C. XII, 162.
[2] Arch. Vat. Vol. 27, May 18.

burghers, the Nuncio, the Spanish Ambassador, even to captains and citizens she met on the streets. She was quick to foresee the danger of new combinations, as when a deputation from the Parlement of Paris, which had stood aloof from the conspiracy of the burghers, called upon her in regard to the failure to pay the interest on the city bonds and their own salaries owing to the disorder. They wanted to send a delegation to the King in regard to these financial questions. But Catherine was already warned that Guise and his followers had long been plotting to get the Parlement involved in their movement by any means. She replied therefore that she would take the matter under consideration and then summoning two of the strongest friends of the King to bring the most excited of the counsellors to her, told them that the agreement between her son and the chiefs of the League was already made on the four chief points and therefore it would be unnecessary for them to send a special delegation. This exposition of the state of affairs had the double result of saving the false appearance that the Parlement was in accord with the movement and making evident to the members of the Parlement that in this long negotiation the difficult point was not anything connected with the public weal but the personal demands of the chief leaguers.[1]

From the very beginning Guise had endeavored to give the opposite impression. Soon after her task of conciliation began, Catherine wrote the King describing an interview in her garden with the Archbishop of Lyons, Guise's most influential councillor. Catherine and her three secretaries tried to find out from him what the Duke of Guise wanted and he persisted in replying that Guise wanted nothing for himself, but, like all the rest of their party, desired the security of the Catholic religion. Nevertheless he dropped these words, "If you conquer the Duke of Guise in courtesy

[1] Letts. IX, 339, 368; Arch. Vat. Vol. 27, May 27; B. N. It. 1737, June 17.

he will content you and conquer you by the obedience he will then show you." "We could not get anything else out of him but this—which seems to me a great deal, for by it you can judge what he wants." Catherine felt all along that he was giving her "the most polite words in the world, but really doing what he thought was to his advantage." And the Nuncio, who was on the inside of all the negotiations, was evidently of the same opinion. That she rightly judged the Bishop of Lyons, is evident to us by a long written opinion of that prelate describing for Guise the line of conduct to be followed. It was to establish himself at court and gradually accumulate in his hands all the power, building up by patronage a solid body of powerful friends, flattering the new favorites of the King and keeping that feeble ruler between "liking and fear." He must be very careful of the attitude of Catherine because she "sooner or later gets what she wants and she has nothing dearer in the world than the advantage of her son and his personal authority." Guise must not make the King jealous of her by too openly consulting her, but the two must be kept on good terms with each other and "so, little by little, without anyone finding it out, you will gradually take to yourself the power and authority of both." [1]

The Leaguers, both Guise and the city under its new revolutionary government, had stated their case to the world in public letters, which represented the King as entirely the aggressor in the affair of the Barricades. The people had only defended their homes and children against foreign soldiers. Guise had been called out of bed by the surprising news of riot and had pacified the people and saved the lives of the King's troops, who were at their mercy. Neither the Duke nor the new government of Paris had any other motives but to defend religion, to repress heresy and to break the tyranny of the Duke of Epernon. Both professed

[1] Letts. IX, 349, 357; Arch. Vat. Vol. 27, May 18; pntd. Villeroy ed. 1622, summarized Richard, 306.

entire respect for the King, who had been misled by false counsellors.[1]

In formulating the definite terms on which they were willing to arrange matters with the King, the Leaguers of Paris were much less prompt. It was a week after the King had left the Louvre before a minute of the request of the League to the King was read to Catherine by the Archbishop of Lyons in the presence of her daughter-in-law the Queen, her secretaries and the Dukes of Guise and Elbeuf. It was chiefly directed against Epernon and his brother and charged upon them the evils financial and religious of the kingdom. The last part of it justified the action of the people of Paris in the Barricades and asked the King to ratify the new city government. In conclusion it asked that two armies should be raised against the heretics, the one to be commanded by the Duke of Mayenne, the younger brother of Guise, and the other by the King in person; while the Queen Mother stayed at Paris as "Regent of the realm, whose government she had always so happily and wisely administered." As soon as the reading was finished, Catherine expressed with great frankness her objections to the part of this document which related to Paris and insisted that the Parisians must "lay at the King's feet proper submission" or nothing could be done. The Duke of Guise took up the defense of Paris with great firmness and the conference broke up without agreement, although Catherine threatened to leave the city if her wishes were not carried out. As she stood firm on this point she carried it in appearance, but it was understood that the new officers, after offering their resignations to the King, were immediately to be reappointed by him. But this after all was only a matter of form. The substance of the demands remained and on the whole it was about the same as the Eleven Articles of Nancy. There followed a long chaffering and bargaining. After it had been going on for a month Catherine wrote in despair to the Duke of Nevers, who had once coquetted

[1] Pntd. de Thou, VII, 200, 206.

with the League but was now faithful to the King, "One day we are almost agreed and the next so far from a bargain that all I can say is that there is nothing to found a good and solid judgment upon." [1]

During this long discussion Catherine knew that the Guise were doing something else besides talk and she kept herself well informed of their activities. She writes on the twenty-third of May, "In two days they have issued fifty commissions for captains to levy infantry." Later she wrote that the Cardinal of Guise had seized the tax money of the King at Meaux, blown in the door of the château at Château-Thierry with a petard and was about to occupy Troyes. They were also taking cannon out of the arsenal to use against Melun and were intending to attack Mantes, Lagny and Corbeil. These three cities were saved for the King by her warning. When a band of lances of the Duke of Lorraine was marching to Paris to reinforce Guise, Catherine got her granddaughter, the Princess of Lorraine, whose marriage she had just arranged, to send one of her gentlemen-in-waiting to the captain with orders to turn back. The captain refused to obey it and the messenger was put in the Bastille by Guise as soon as he got back to Paris. He was told it would cost 6,000 scudi to get out, but the Princess, undoubtedly at Catherine's suggestion, said to the Duke that she had sent the gentleman and ought to be punished if any one was. "She would pay the money with her jewels." The Duke told her sharply she had no business meddling with such affairs. She answered he talked to her that way only because she was a woman and she made so much trouble that her messenger was set free.[2]

The little knot of women who were the focus of these struggling interests evidently felt the situation get on their nerves at times. The Queen (Henry's wife) was with Catherine and she grew more and more angered at Guise as the weeks went by. One day she burst out to him, "Since

[1] Letts. IX, 342, 343, 344, 347, 356, 357, 371; Arch. Vat. 27, May 23.
[2] Arch. Vat. 28, June 6; B. N. It. 1737, June 17.

you won't accept the offers of the King do you want to fight him?" Guise kept silent. "I say," repeated the Queen, "do you want to fight him?" He replied, "I do not want to be forced to, but if I were, the person of the King would cause me more fear than all his forces." Catherine herself fell into one of her quick passions when, wishing to go to hear mass at the church of the Capuchins, she found a gate through which she had to pass locked and the sentinels refused to open it. When Guise came to see her, and he came every day, she expressed her indignation. He made an excuse that the lock was broken and could not be opened. She sent at once to find out if this was so and when word came back that it was not so, fell into great wrath. "What," she said, "do you think you can treat me that way? Must I ask your permission to go where I choose? If I want to go out I'll risk my life and that of many others on it and we shall see who will win." [1]

The whole affair was really international and the neighbors of France were feeding the fire to bake their bread. The Duke of Lorraine was insisting to the cadets of his house that the agreement must give him a free hand to conquer Jametz and Sedan, which he had so long attacked in vain. The Duke of Savoy said his allies of the League must get for him the withdrawal of French protection from Geneva and even tried vainly to force Guise to get some French territory ceded to him. Guise had long been the pensioner of Philip II and in the words of a shrewd observer was "about to throw himself into the arms of Spain for whose benefit this tragedy is being played." Even the Nuncio, who was anxious to help the abandonment of heretic Sedan, Geneva and England, felt the "difficulty was artificially protracted in order to give the Spanish Armada time to land the army in England." Catherine had a stormy interview with the Spanish Ambassador, in which she vainly tried to get him to agree that the Spanish army in the Netherlands would give no help to these princes

[1] B. N. It. 1737, June 3.

defying their King. He replied that the King of France had helped his late brother to aid the rebels of the Netherlands and suggested that at least these defiant princes were good Catholics; to which Catherine answered, "We should find means to defend ourselves against his master. It was not the first time that we have had war, and"—here the letter in which she is describing the interview breaks off and the next sheet is lost.[1]

Under all this pressure the poor King, whose warlike energy was gone with his youth, found himself in a situation thus described by a contemporary: "Without a single faithful counsellor in whom he could trust, afraid of the loyalty of everyone, he concealed his real thoughts, and struggled as best he could in the midst of the schism unhealable and incurable of a country with two Kings." One by one he granted all the demands of the League, piteously insisting that some of his surrenders should be secret. He said he could not publicly renounce peace and friendship with England because of the many French merchants in England who would be arrested and lose their capital. Besides he had no fleet to defend his shores against the excellent fleet of Elizabeth.[2]

But on almost every point openly or secretly the King finally gave way. The personal concessions made to the family of Guise and their adherents were enormous. Besides the cautionary towns granted to them for six years by the Treaty of Nemours (1585) they were to hold Orleans, Montereau, Boulogne, Havre de Grace, Bourges, Angers, the office of colonel of the infantry, the first disposable baton of a marshal. The result of these conditions in the judgment of the Venetian Ambassador was "to put almost absolute authority in the hands of the Duke of Guise." The question of what office should be given to Guise was much discussed between Catherine, the King and his councillors. In the final meeting in Paris with the chiefs of the

[1] B. N. It. 1737, June 1728; Neg. Tosc. IV, 786; Arch. Vat. Vol. 27, June 28; Vol. 28, July 5.

[2] Neg. Tosc. 782, 792; Arch. Vat. Vol. 27, Nuncio.

League when they signed the articles of the two accords public and secret, Catherine took Guise by the hand and said besides all that was agreed on, in order to make him more certain of the favor of the King, she wanted to tell him that the King would give him supreme command of the armies of the whole kingdom with the title of Constable or Lieutenant General. When the Duke made no reply Catherine asked him why he did not answer. He replied the thing was of such importance that he needed a little time to think it over. He humbly kissed the hands of the King and thanked him for the honor which he owed, he was sure, chiefly to her, but for the present he could not accept.[1]

A solemn Te Deum to celebrate the peace was sung in Notre Dame without the presence of the King. Then the public articles of accord were read with sound of trumpet, followed by salvos of artillery. It only remained to arrange the personal relations between the King and the Duke of Guise and Catherine's last great task of public mediation was done. This was not easy. Catherine went to see her son and arranged for an interview at Chartres to which she was to bring Guise. Meantime it had been decided that a new office should be created for the Duke and that the King should personally confer it upon him. Villeroy, the King's chief minister, has explained how the commission of the office was drawn. He showed the King a commission for a Constable and one for a Lieutenant General of France, and the King ordered him to take points from both to compose a new power for the Duke of Guise. Before the day of the interview the King hesitated and was about to restrict the authority of this commission, but was persuaded to stand by his original decision. Villeroy, certainly not without the consent of Catherine, was undoubtedly the chief agent in preventing him from withdrawing this complete surrender to Guise and his faction.[2]

[1] B. N. It. 1737, July 3; Arch. Vat. Vol. 27, July 18.
[2] Mem. Ligue, II, 368, Villeroy.

On the other side also there was hesitation before this interview. The Venetian Ambassador wrote home the day before it was to take place, "Those who understand the present business are much afraid of some terrible occurrence, because distrust is very great. A lady (who was driven from court) told the King the Duke would make him prisoner and to the Duke came warnings that the King has decided to kill him. What sort of a peace can this be?" Guise discussed with the Spanish Ambassador these rumors that the King would kill him. He said it was better to risk danger than to show weakness. Besides he could run no greater risks now than when he went alone into the King's cabinet before the Barricades. The King could hardly plan to kill him without its coming to his ears, for he had confidential friends around the King. The Ambassador added, "I suspect he trusts chiefly on being warned of danger by Villeroy, for the King could not plan anything without Villeroy's knowing it and Guise, as I wrote to you some months ago, told me he had gained Villeroy for a strong adherent." [1]

The dreaded interview passed off well. The King showed himself generous and Guise, with the utmost respect and humility, received from him the new office which made him the first man in the kingdom. But the old distrust was only hidden under this forced accord and in the King's mind a new suspicion had arisen. The Venetian Ambassador, who saw much of the inside of things at the court, wrote that when the Queen Mother went to see her son to arrange for the interview with Guise, she was "not received with the usual signs of respect and there were open signs of a lack of confidence on account of which she has come back very much dissatisfied." A week later he wrote, "The King apparently suspects Villeroy about this arrangement of peace," and, as we have already seen, the suspicion was just. The King had already made up his mind that beaten in Paris and the northern cities he would appeal to France

[1] B. N. It. 1737, July 29; A. N. K. 1567 f. 100.

and make his appeal to France at the Estates General, which he summoned for the end of the autumn at Blois. This determination had been deprecated by the Guise party, who said that to assemble the Estates when everybody is armed was impossible and besides it would delay the war against the Huguenots. But the King persisted in his determination and the chiefs of the League did not dare oppose openly the assembly of the deputies of the provinces of France; a proposal very popular in the cities and their chief strength lay in the cities. They could only try to dissuade the King from this step in "underhand ways." [1]

No observer believed that the accord was cordial on either side. The King's graciousness covered fear and hatred and the respectful humility of Guise was based on contempt for repeated warnings about danger to his life which, the Spanish Ambassador wrote, came "from everywhere," and ambitions, which every unprejudiced observer suspected but which no one, probably not even he, could define. It was not simply because he was an Italian of the sixteenth century, but because he knew the situation, that the Florentine Envoy wrote in the middle of that summer, "The day of the dagger will come." [2]

[1] B. N. It. 1737, June 3, July 29, Aug. 7, Aug. 12.
[2] A. N. K. 1568, Sept. 4; Neg. Tosc. IV, 795; B. N. It. 1737, June 3.

CHAPTER XLIV

CATHERINE'S FALL FROM POWER AND DEATH

Behind the King there was gathering a faction in opposition to the faction of Guise. The Montmorencies and some of the Bourbons were leading the Huguenots or allied with them, but a group known as the Princes of the Blood (royal and Catholic Bourbons) was forming to defend the right of their house to the throne in case, as seemed likely, the last of the Valois died without heirs. They feared an attempt of Guise to seize it. The heads of this group, the Cardinal of Vendôme and the Duke of Montpensier, were working to get their "adherents in all parts of the realm elected to the Estates General" summoned for the month of October. On the other hand Guise, as he wrote the Spanish Ambassador, was perfectly aware that

"Throughout all France they are trying to arrange the election of deputies who favor the princes of the blood royal and want, under pretext of lessening taxes, peace with the Huguenots. I have left nothing undone on my side, but have sent into all the provinces and bailiwicks men whom I can trust to work against their efforts. I believe that I have so far succeeded that the majority of the deputies will be for us. The Marquis of Conti, the Count of Soissons and the Duke of Montpensier (the chief Bourbon princes not fighting among the Huguenots) will come here within a few days with a train of nobles, mostly Huguenots. I have sent word to my friends in all directions and I shall not be the weaker." [1]

In this situation the King, whom everybody had come to disregard as incapable of independent action, suddenly made a very strong and decided move. His suspicions were directed not only towards his enemies, they embraced the

[1] B. N. It. 1737, Sept. 8; Arch. Vat. Aug. 24; A. N. K. 1568 f. 104.

whole circle of his closest friends and councillors. The last of his mignons were gone. Joyeuse and his brother had fallen at Coutras and he had been obliged to divest Epernon and his brother of much of their power and send them from court. So far as we can read his mind by his acts, he now began to think that the men immediately around him, who advised and carried out any plans he formed, were too dependent either on his mother or Guise or upon both. So far as his chief councillor Villeroy was concerned, we have seen the proof, though the King had not, that he had an understanding with the Duke of Guise—a thing he afterwards strenuously denied in his memoirs. The truth about the others we do not know, but we may suspect that they took orders more from Catherine than from the King and were all somewhat inclined in their secret hearts to turn toward the rising sun.

On the 8th of September, 1588, the King, without the smallest warning, carried out a palace revolution. He dismissed, by a curt note written in his own hand, eight of the men who had stood closest to him in the conduct of the state. It was delivered simultaneously to all of them, and read as follows: "Villeroy, I am very well satisfied with your services but go immediately to your house and stay there until I send for you. Do not ask the reason for this note, but obey me." He replaced them by men new to the court. The new guardian of the great seal was a well-known advocate of no experience and small ability in affairs of state, but of unimpeachable reputation, who when he came to try and refuse the honor, was obliged to ask which of the three persons in the cabinet where he was received, was the King. Catherine appeared "to resent this action of her son very much because most of those dismissed were appointed to service by her during her regencies." The Venetian Ambassador reported that "seeing a thing of such importance done without her knowing anything about it, she is entirely beside herself." When she finally said to her son, "You have made great changes," "yes," he replied, "the

Chancellor was a grafter, Bellièvre was a Huguenot, Villeroy an ambitious braggart who wanted to keep all business in his own hands, Brulart worthless and Pinart an avaricious scoundrel who would sell his own father and mother." The new men were ordered to employ no subordinates who had served under their predecessors and it was noticeable that they never went near Catherine.[1]

This palace revolution, whatever may have been its cause, is the symbol of a great change in Catherine's life. After she brought Guise to meet the King at Chartres, she had no real influence on affairs of state. As she drew close to the end of life her ruling passion, the love of power, had little to feed on. She still tried to use her talents for conciliation, and Pierre Gondi, by her favor Bishop of Paris and Cardinal, the son of one of her old Florentine protégés, who had been maitre d'hotel to her husband, wrote to the Pope in the end of September, "I want to tell Your Holiness of the great and continued good offices of the Queen Mother to pacify everything. I would never have believed the trouble she takes, even beyond the natural limits of the strength of her age, unless I had seen it and the great zeal she shows and her hopes that the outcome of it all will be good." [2] But these were the volunteer efforts of one who acted without real authority. Never since the days when Diana stood between her and her beloved husband, or since the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duke of Guise and their niece Mary stood between her and her son, Francis II, had Catherine been so completely on the outside of things—sitting at the court table but not really in the great game of state. Her letters for the last five months of her life repeat the record of her correspondence for most of the years when she was Queen Regnant of France without influence in important affairs of state. Only twenty-seven have survived and only one of them is of real importance. Seven

[1] Villeroy, Cheverny, Neg. Tosc. IV, 832; Pasquier, XIII, 1; de Thou, VII, 272; Arch. Vat. Sept. 10; B. N. fds. fr. 15909 f. 140; It. 1737, Sept. 23; Villeroy, 97.

[2] L'Epinois ctd., 216.

are to old friends, Matignon, Bellièvre, the Duke of Nevers, Villeroy, Miron. Twenty of them are to Italy, letters of introduction or intercession for some adherent who sought her influence there. The only really significant letter tells the whole story, i. e., that there is no story to tell. In the end of September one of her old dependents recently dismissed from office had written to her. She answers with her own hand in the obscure style usual with her when her feelings were moved, but her resentment is plain.

"Monsieur de Bellièvre:

"I have received your letter and seen what you send me and I should be very sorry if you took what you said for any other occasion except to regret the wrong which has been done me in teaching the King that it is right to love his mother, as God commands, but not to give her enough authority and influence to make her able to stop them from doing what they want. Because those who have done this have done it, I believe, for no other reason than, when they want to persuade him to do something, that I cannot stop it by begging him not to do it and not thinking my remonstrances of any weight they can go ahead with what they have persuaded him to do. They have brought it about that I have not the means as great as the will to make you know by actual results the good will I have always had for you; as I will do, so far as God shall give me power, both for you and yours. . . .

Blois, September 20, 1588.

"Sincerely yours,
"Caterine." [1]

In the splendid château of Blois a desperate struggle was going on from the end of September until Christmas, between the King and the Duke of Guise—a struggle cloaked with all outward courtesy, but a struggle which must mean either the submission or the death of Guise or the subjugation of the King to his authority. That the King at the beginning meant it to be mortal is not probable. The historian de Thou was present at Blois and writes with first hand knowledge of the dramatic events, and he acutely

[1] Letts. IX, 382.

points out if this had been the case the King would hardly have put Guise on his guard from the start by attacking him with the biting allusions of the speech from the throne at the opening of the Estates. Henry delivered this in person with all his oratorical skill. He had deliberately summoned the Estates with the idea that he might regain the prestige he had lost at Paris, and his opening challenge to his enemy was the occasion of the first of several successive parliamentary defeats which proved that Guise was stronger than he was among the delegates of the nation. The King had a warning of this, even before his speech, in the election of the Presidents of the Orders; for the Clergy elected Guise's brother, the Cardinal of Guise, the Nobles, Guise's most active adherent, the Count of Brissac, and the Third Estate, La Chapelle Marteau, one of the heads of the League at Paris.[1]

No sooner was the King's speech delivered than the adherents of the Duke of Guise went to complain of it to Catherine; whom they still regarded as the best intermediary with the King. She gave an evasive answer and they sent the Archbishop of Lyons to the King to protest against its printing. The King refused to change it: in spite of the threat that the deputies would leave the Estates without a quorum. Meantime the Guisards had frightened the printer into not issuing the copies already printed and by the intercession of Catherine, who in spite of the King's distrust of her, had acquired over his mind an influence which it was not easy for him to escape induced the King to soften some of the phrases of his address. One of the paragraphs he did not alter for the press must have brought some balm to the wounded spirit of his mother.

"I cannot pass over in silence the infinite pains which the Queen my mother has taken to meet the evils which afflict the state and I think it right to render to her in this illustrious assembly, in my own name and in the name of the nation, public thanks. Not only is it true that I owe to her the honor of

[1] Arch. Vat. 27, Sept. 12; Pasquier, Bk. XIII, Lett. 6.

being your master seated on the leading throne of Christendom, but if I have any experience, if I have been brought up in good principles, whatever piety is to be seen in me, above all the zeal I have for the establishment of the Catholic Religion and the reformation of the state—I owe them all to her. What work has she not undertaken to appease the troubles which have arisen and to establish everywhere the true worship of God and public peace? Has her advanced age been able to induce her to spare herself? Has she not for this cause sacrificed her health? It is indeed from her that I have learned to find all my pleasure in the cares which are inseparable from government. That is why I have convoked the Estates General of the realm as the surest and most salutary remedy for the evil by which my people are afflicted and it was my mother who confirmed me in that resolution." [1]

The consideration of the internal troubles of France was suddenly interrupted by an attack from outside. Charles Emanuel, the young Duke of Savoy, son of one of the best friends of Catherine's married life, had for months been "fishing" in troubled waters and had made overtures both to the King and to Guise in the attempt to gain some advantage for himself. He now believed France was about to break into pieces. Spain wanted Brittany and he hoped for the Marquisate of Saluces, Dauphiny, perhaps some of the valley of the Rhone and a free hand to conquer Geneva. He carried on negotiations with the Pope, the King of Spain and the leader of the Huguenots in Dauphiny, with whom he was secretly on very good terms. He suddenly seized Carmagnola, the capital of the Marquisate of Saluces, the last remnant of the French conquests in Italy. The town contained four hundred cannon and large military stores. The other fortresses of the Marquisate made little resistance and the French garrisons marched out of Italy drums beating and colors flying. Although Charles Emanuel sent word that he had occupied Saluces "as a servant of the Most Christian King and to save it from the Huguenots," the barefaced lie did not soften the treacherous aggression which

[1] De Thou, VII, 273, 289 (at Blois, 348).

roused the greatest anger among all classes at Blois. Among the deputies many voices were raised calling for truce with the Huguenots in order to avenge this wanton insult to France and Guise wrote to the Spanish Ambassador that he feared this movement might stop all his plans and ruin religion. Deputies from all the three Estates came to the King to ask a declaration of war against Savoy, and the King made so martial a reply that from all the deputies burst the old cry, "Vive Le Roi!" [1]

It was again to Catherine that the Ambassador of Savoy came for help in persuading the King of the sincerity of his master's profession that he had only seized the Marquisate temporarily to save it from the Huguenots, and offering to restore it to trustworthy governors. He got little comfort from her, though she afterwards told the Legate that she thought it better not to fight. She carried the message to the King and he was very angry, saying it was only an excuse to spin out the affair, but he asked "his mother to recall the Ambassador and find out more clearly what was in the Duke's mind." She had another interview with the messenger and finally put before him the dilemma, return of the Marquisate or war. He replied "that is to cast the Duke into desperation." "Well, then," answered the Queen Mother, "if I have taken away your cloak and you ask me to give it back, does that cast me into desperation? If you haven't anything better to say to me, get out," and without waiting for an answer, rose and left the room, exceedingly angered. So popular was the war with Savoy, even among Guise's own adherents, that he swam with the tide and spoke passionately for it. But he and the Ambassador of Spain passed the word around to change the attitude of the Estates. In consequence the Third Estate and the Clergy modified their opinions and lost their zeal for war. The King maintained, nevertheless, his warlike attitude and replied, "with some heat," to the request of the Ambassador

[1] Raulich ctd., 336, 348, 358, 360; de Thou, VII, 294; de Croze, pntd. II, 366, 374; B. N. It. 1737, Nov. 21, l'Epinois ctd. 233.

of Savoy for an audience, that "the only thing that could procure one was news of the restitution of Saluces." Instead of granting the interview the King sent a passport.[1]

The fine play of the Duke of Guise in this affair did not escape the notice of the King. He had tried to placate him. The Legate describes how he was walking in the royal garden when the Queen Mother came in and began to walk with him. The King came in with many nobles and soon the "Queen Mother and the King called me and walked up and down one on each side of me. I said, 'Guise is much in debt. Your Majesty is very generous, but you never give anything to Guise.' The King said, 'That is a good idea. I will do it as soon as I can get the money.' I have since heard the King sent to offer him 200,000 scudi. Guise would not take it until the King was better off financially, but since the offer Guise has treated the King much more frankly." Suspicions soon sprang up again and the Legate writes how walking another day with Catherine and the King in the garden, the Duke of Guise and several cardinals strolled near. The King, afraid of being overheard, broke off the serious talk with jests and, walking into an inner garden, told the captain of his guards not to let anyone in and the gates were shut.[2]

The important matter the King wished to discuss without being overheard by the Duke of Guise or his friends, was one in which Catherine was of necessity involved. She had inherited from her youngest son the city of Cambray. Philip II had never recognized the Duke of Anjou's right to the city, which had rebelled against him, and through his Ambassador now offered to give Catherine by the help of his fleet an exchange for Cambray. The power of Spain on the sea was, it was true, lessened. The Great Armada had been thoroughly beaten by the English in the end of July and had sailed away to the north around Scotland. In the

[1] Arch. Vat. 27, Nov. 21; B. N. It. 1737, Nov. 16; de Croze ctd. Span. Amb., II, 378; l'Epinois ctd. 241.
[2] Arch. Vat., 27, Oct. 8, Nov. 7.

end of September a notice had been posted all over Paris, "If anyone knows the whereabouts of the Armada of Spain, victorious over England, and will tell the Spanish Ambassador, he will give him five francs reward." But two-thirds of the beaten fleet had finally crept back to harbor in Spain. Philip now offered to use it in conquering Rochelle for the French Crown. Further, he sent word that if France would help Spain in Flanders, Spain would help to clear France of all heretics and if she wished would aid her to extend her boundary to the Rhine in exchange for help against England. The next morning Catherine and the King talked again in the garden about this secret union and the Legate had hopes that it might be made, which proved vain.[1]

The last attempt to allay the suspicions of the two men seems to have been on the 9th of December, when in an interview held in Catherine's presence, they went over the past, talked of their causes for ill-will and agreed to forget them. The Duke swore fidelity and the King promised to protect the Duke. But in spite of these submissive words the King found the strongest proofs of the power of Guise over the Estates and his will to use it against his authority in their demands about finance and government. The Third Estate, where the friends of Guise were dominant, almost without serious opposition, asked the King to cancel all taxes made since 1576 and persisted in their request in spite of his remonstrances. This roused the King to deep anger. He asked Guise and his right hand man, the Archbishop of Lyons, to use their influence in the matter, but Guise denied he had any influence in the Third Estate, which was manifestly untrue, because he had written shortly before to the Spanish Ambassador, "I have so well handled the Estates that I have made them"—take the action he wished. A few days later, the Third Estate went almost tumultuously to the King and said they would leave the Assembly the next morning if their request was not granted.

[1] Neg. Tosc. IV, 825; Arch. Vat. 27, Oct. 29, Nov. 7.

He gave way, but his distrust of Guise was deepened. He resented even more the urgent request of the Third Estate for the appointment of a special council to have charge of "the due observance of resolutions passed in these Estates." This action seemed to the King, as he told the Legate with great feeling, planned "to ruin the royal authority." "He would sooner die than see his kingly dignity lessened and tarnished." [1]

The King made Guise aware that he was feeling the pressure brought to bear on him and the third week in December the Duke went to the Legate to complain that the King did not trust him, and showed such discontent that the Legate begged the King to do something to quiet the Duke. The Legate advised some lucrative employment. The King said the advice was good and asked the Legate to talk it over with the Queen Mother. He went and Catherine saw him in spite of the fact that she had been in bed for ten days with a serious illness. She thanked him for what he had said to the King and promised to urge it upon him. The Legate added to his letter, "To tell the truth I am not content with the condition of the Queen Mother. She has a heavy cold and a troublesome cough and fever every day. She is weakened by her illness and with seventy years on top of that." Her illness did not prevent Catherine from dictating the last of her letters we have, and it was characteristic of her that it was a letter of consolation to one of her old friends:

"To Mr. Robert Miron,

"Councillor of the King and Intendant of His Finances:

"I am very much grieved to hear of your illness which compels you to retire, but I believe that resting your mind and body for a little while you will be able to return to your office and do better work there than ever. Meanwhile if I can do anything for you I shall be very glad to show my recognition of your services to the King my son and to me. May God give you health.

"Caterine.

Blois, the sixth of December, 1588." [2]

[1] B. N. It. 1737, Dec. 9; A. N. K. 1567 f. 160; Arch. Vat. 22, Nov. 7.
[2] B. N. It. 1737, Dec. 15; Letts. IX, 394.

Two days later Catherine had the satisfaction of finally bringing to a conclusion the long negotiation for the marriage of her granddaughter to the Grand Duke of Florence. The contract was signed in the evening in the rooms of the Legate. The marriage was celebrated by proxy in the chapel of the château of Blois and Catherine was able to attend and have a dance in her apartments afterward.

Guise continued to force the King's hand, using "his power in the Estates to compel the King by their authority to make a secret council to treat of all the affairs of the Kingdom in which there shall not be anyone contrary to his party," and the Legate thought there was great danger of a break. Indeed, the followers of Guise were talking rather openly of a more striking step "to nominate him as Constable by the authority of the Estates to save religion and reform the government in spite of the King and his ministers." [1]

In addition to these open signs of an intention to limit his power, warnings came to the King of conspiracies against his person. Guise and his brother Mayenne were not on good terms. They had quarreled about a woman and even challenged each other to a duel, which was only composed after they were on the ground. Mayenne sent word to the King from Lyons to be on his guard against his brother. The hatred of the King among the Leaguers of Paris was terrible. Satires were constantly printed against him, which rival those of the Huguenots under Francis II against the Cardinal of Lorraine, as for example these lines from a sonnet to France. "Thy fleur-de-lis is dying. It stinks in the nostrils of God like a rotten flower and he has ground it under his heel that he may not smell it any more." A cousin of Guise, the Duke of Aumale, sent his wife from Paris to warn the King of a plot he had heard discussed to send forces to seize him and an examination of the correspondence of the Parisian delegates to the Estates proved

[1] Arch. Vat. 22, Dec. 8; Vol. 27, Dec. 19; de Thou, VII, 303, 326, Davila (at Blois).

the accuracy of the information. Guise swore, "By the body of Christ I have never had even a thought like that." The King answered he was sure of it because even if any one were stronger than he was, he knew he could not take away his liberty without killing him. To this ambiguous answer the King was moved, among other things, by the fact that Guise's sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, wore a pair of golden scissors hanging at her belt as part of her chatelaine and was not always discreet in her choice of those to whom she explained that they were for the purpose of tonsuring the King when he was consigned to a monastery as unfit to reign. This attitude was rendered sinister by the fact that the emissaries of Guise were active in bribing the royal guards and the officers of the army. This process reached its climax when Guise offered the Marshal d'Aumont to raise a popular protest in Normandy against the King's appointment of the loyal Duke of Montpensier as governor and so secure the appointment of d'Aumont as governor of the richest of the provinces. The Marshal replied that he did not want to disoblige the Duke of Montpensier, whose servitor he was, and reported the whole conversation to the King with the opinion that this sort of bribery was being extensively tried among all the leading loyal supporters of the throne. The King knew the danger because he had been trying in the same way to seduce the chief adherents of Guise.[1]

Many people who were aware how far the Duke was going in his attempts to put the King in a position where he would be helpless in his hands had now come to share the opinion written home by the Tuscan agent three months before: "The day of the dagger will come." In the end of September Guise had written to the Spanish Ambassador of the warnings which came to him "from all sides, of an attempt upon my life." He said he had no fear because he had bribed so large a part of the royal guards that if "they begin

[1] De Thou, VII, 323, 324, 325; Arch. Vat., 27, Dec. 31; Lenient, II, 88; B. N. It. 1737, Dec. 6, 15; Neg. Tosc., IV, 830; Arch. Vat., 27, Sept. 26.

that sort of thing I will end it more rudely than I did at Paris." Against a sudden surprise he trusted in his great strength, his skill with the sword and the precaution of never going anywhere without a strong suite. Probably also he relied on the known reluctance of Catherine to choose the road of violence instead of the road of negotiations to escape from a dangerous position. True he had joined with her in the St. Bartholomew massacre; but the sixteen years of war or armed truce which had followed that attempt at pacification by blood did not encourage repetition. He saw Catherine so often in his conferences with the King that he was not aware, as the Venetian Ambassador was, that she had lost completely all her old control over her son's final decisions. He persisted, therefore, in staying at Blois. He was afraid of only one thing—going again alone, as he had done at Paris, into the cabinet of the King without having his suite in the antechamber. That he was determined not to do.[1]

But the King, probably sometime after the fifteenth of December, certainly after his mother was in bed seriously ill, had formed a subtle plot to trap him into doing this very thing. Before finally deciding he had called a conference of four or five of his most confidential gentlemen. One advised arresting the Duke and putting him on trial, but the others thought this so dangerous as to be impossible and advised killing him summarily. Next to the King's salon, from which his cabinet opened, there was a large room where the council was held. He sent word to the Duke of Guise, his brother the Cardinal and the Archbishop of Lyons to come early the next morning to the meeting where they were needed in the discussion of the finances. Guise had never been to see the King while the council was sitting and did not know that the door leading from the large room where it sat to the outer corridor and staircase was at such times always closed. He came at half-past seven in the morning and was soon joined by his brother

[1] A. N. K. 1568 f. 104, B. N. It. 1737, Dec. 5; de Croze, pntd. II, 381.

and the Archbishop. Behind them all doors were closed and no one was allowed to enter the château. A solid body of guards filled the staircase and stopped all who tried to go up. Guise felt a sudden nausea as he entered the council chamber and sent his secretary back to his rooms to find a silver comfit box he often carried. The secretary, returning quickly and finding the staircase blocked with guards and all the doors locked, sent in the comfit box. Thoroughly alarmed by the aspect of the corridors, he tried in vain to get a word of warning in to the Duke. So he went to the rooms of the Queen Mother and crying, "Help! Mercy!" tried to open the door leading from her antechamber and then suddenly from the room above their head they heard a rush and trampling of feet.[1]

Meanwhile in the council chamber the Duke's nausea had been followed by a nose bleed and a slight chill. He sent for a handkerchief and had the fire built up, and then turned to listen to the intendant of finances reading a report. The discussion had not gone very far when a secretary entered and said in a low voice to the Duke that the King wanted to speak to him in his cabinet. The Duke bowed to the members of the council and followed into the King's antechamber. Everything was ready there. Early that morning the King had brought down from their lodgings in the attic nine of his bodyguard of forty-five country gentlemen who had been nominated in 1585, half by Joyeuse and half by Epernon, and told them what he wanted done. They let the Duke cross the room and lift the tapestry at the door of the King's cabinet and then they fell upon him and killed him with daggers. The first blow in the neck choked him with blood so that he could not speak, but he put forth his great strength, dragged his assailants across the room, broke a man's nose with a blow of the silver comfit box he carried in his hand, and tried to draw his sword, before he fell. At the noise of the struggle the Archbishop rushed to the door of the King's

[1] Beauvais-Nangis. Deposition of Guise Secretary, Arch. C. XII, 189.

rooms but found it locked, and the Cardinal of Guise, probably with the hope of calling help, rushed toward the opposite door, but the Marshal d'Aumont stopped him and both were taken from the room. At the same moment the other members of the family were put under arrest, and a little later a strong force of guards marched out of the château and arrested the President of the Third Estate and three other Parisian deputies, together with Count Brissac, President of the Nobility. The next morning the Cardinal of Guise was summoned from the room where he had been imprisoned and killed with swords and hallebardes in the corridor. The two bodies were carried to the cellar of the château and consumed with quicklime.[1]

So died the first of "the three Henrys" to fall by the dagger; an omen of whose bloody end had been recorded years before. We have seen at the time of St. Bartholomew the reaction in the French nobility of the mediæval sense of honor against the new code of the Italian Renascence. A story is told in connection with the death of the first to die of "the three Henrys" which records, if not a fact, certainly a state of mind which still survived. Crillon, master of the camp of the royal guards, was in a sense "the glass of fashion and the mould of form" among the warlike French courtiers. He was a bitter and open enemy of Guise. Davila, who was at Blois, says the King first asked him to take charge of killing the Duke. Crillon replied that he was "a soldier and a cavalier as well as a faithful servitor of the King. He would challenge Guise and kill him or fall in the duel, but he was not an executioner." [2]

Henry of Guise was, like Coligny, a personage who filled the eye of the world far more than the King under whom he lived and he was possessed of many unusual qualities both of body and mind. If he had the distinguished military ability of his father, he never had the chance to display it,

[1] B. N. It. 1733 f. 538, Dec. 24; de Thou, Davila, Arch. Vat. 27, Dec. 23, 31; B. N. Nouvs. Acqs., Dec. 23.

[2] Davila, III, pt. 2, p. 291.

for the victories of Dormans, Auneau and Vimory were little more than brilliant cavalry skirmishes. His almost servile dependence on Spain, recorded in his letters, is an ignoble trait and his character lacks a certain largeness apparent in his father. Many of his fellow Catholics, perhaps unjustly, doubted the sincerity of his extreme professions of zeal for the Church and believed that he was using religion as a stalking horse for his personal ambition. They accused him also of an ingrained faithlessness to his word. However that may be, disgust at the peculiarly revolting manner of his death, by which the King was willing to defend himself in the teeth of his most solemn oaths, ought not to blind our eyes to the fact that Henry of Valois had most cogent reason to believe that his authority and liberty, if not his life, were in mortal danger of a treacherous attack from his old playmate, Henry of Guise.

Catherine, ill in bed almost under the room where the death struggle was going on, asked several times what the noise was, but got no answer until the King came down the private staircase which led from the loggia on which his rooms opened. As he entered Catherine's room he asked her physician, from whom we have the account of what passed, how she was. "Well," he answered. "She has just taken her medicine." The King drew near to the bed and said, according to the Florentine reporter:

" 'Good day, Madame, I beg you to forgive me. Mr. de Guise is dead. I have had him killed, having got ahead of him in what he planned to do to me. I could not bear his insolence any longer . . . although I had resolved to bear it in order not to dip my hands in his blood. . . . Nevertheless, knowing and proving every hour that he was sapping and mining (these were his very words) my rule, my life and my realm, I made up my mind to do this deed which has long occupied my mind with the question whether I ought to do it or not. At length seeing that my patience brought me loss and shame and that every day I was irritated and offended by new plots, in the end, God has inspired and aided me to do it; Whom I am now going solemnly to thank in church at the sacrifice of the mass. I wish to impose taxes on my

people. I wish to assemble the Estates, but I wish also that they should speak according to their rank and not like a King as they have done. I intend no sort of ill to his family. I will favor and help his people like the Duke of Lorraine, of Nemours, of Elbeuf, and the Duchess of Nemours, who are, I know, faithful and friendly to me. But I wish to be the King and no longer a prisoner and a slave as I have been from the 13th of May until this hour in which I begin again to be the King and the Master. I have also posted guards around the Prince of Joinville, Nemours, Elbeuf and the Duchess of Nemours not to offend them but for my own security. I have done the same to the Cardinal of Guise and the Archbishop of Lyons and for the same reason to my uncle the Cardinal of Bourbon, who will suffer no harm from me; but I will put him where he will be comfortable and I cannot be hurt by him. I will carry out more zealously the war against the Huguenots whom I want to extirpate from my realm.' After these words, spoken with the same steadiness with which he began, he went out without the smallest sign of excitement either in his face or his thoughts, which seemed to me marvellous." [1]

That Catherine was enormously disturbed in mind we may be sure, not only because something had been done of which she disapproved, but that a step so important had been taken without her knowledge. If we have read her character aright, it must have seemed like a stab in her own heart. The physician has not recorded her reply, from which it is a natural conclusion that she said none of the striking things put into her mouth by other writers who were not present. It is probable that she covered her chagrin and dismay by some banal and submissive remark like the one de Thou assigns to her, "I only pray God that the result may be what you hope."

The King's hopes of making peace with the family of Lorraine in France by killing the head of their house were of course illusory. The Duke of Mayenne answered the friendly message of the man who had killed his two brothers by raising an army and openly swearing vendetta,—the King's life or his own. The slowness of the King in seizing

[1] Neg. Tosc. IV, 832.

the citadels enabled the League to raise sixteen cities against the Crown and the King, unable to fight two wars at once, was obliged, much against his will, to make a year's truce with the King of Navarre. This threw two wars on the hands of the League and their forces were losing in the field when eight months after the death of Guise the King was assassinated by a monk who thought he was doing God a service in killing an impious tyrant. So died the last of Catherine's sons, a feeble King whose only vigorous act was a crime, planned without her knowledge, which stopped halfway; even as the greater crime to which she had incited her other son stopped halfway. For Catherine and her children, in whom the intellectual vigor of the strong stock of the Medicis ran to seed, never grasped the meaning of that fundamental maxim of the statecraft which is founded on the gospel of "the Prince of this world"; which Luther and Machiavelli agreed in interpreting, "If you must sin, sin boldly."

Notwithstanding the shock of the murder of Guise, Catherine's health improved and a week later her fever but not her cough had left her, and her physician could write, "In spite of the great trouble of her mind and her inability to see any way of meeting the dangers of the hour, the Queen Mother is convalescent and in eight days we hope she can return to her ordinary way of living." The new grand duchess was still with her grandmother, preparing to go to her home in Florence, and Catherine said to her again and again, "How lucky you are to be going to a land at peace and not to see the ruin of my poor kingdom." But Catherine was not willing to wait the slow process of recovery. The day after this letter of her doctor, which was New Year's Day, she insisted in spite of his protest in getting up to go to mass in the chapel of the château, and afterwards at the King's request visited the Cardinal of Bourbon, confined in his rooms, to tell him that he was now at liberty. The interview was stormy, for the Cardinal bitterly reproached her. "Madame, if you had not tricked us and made us

come here with good words and a thousand assurances, these two would not be dead and I should be free." Once before she had heard this reproach from the house of Bourbon, twenty-eight years before at Orleans, when the Prince of Condé was led off to prison and toward the scaffold. This time the reproach was unjust and her physician thought her indignation and a chill she caught in the corridors of the great château brought back the illness "from which she was scarcely free and still less recuperated." On the third of January the Legate reports her as having a little fever. The next night she had a high fever, with pain in her lungs, and the day after, at half past one, she died of what her physician called peri-pneumonia, which brought on apoplexy. In her last hours, "she confessed, took the communion, received extreme unction so contritely and devoutly that she has left us as much consolation in the hope of her glory as she has left grief in all for so notable a loss." Her physician broke off his letter, excusing himself because "tears for his lovable mistress prevented him from writing more fully." The autopsy revealed "a condition of health in her bodily organs which, if the grace of God had kept her from pleurisy, would have given her many years of life." [1]

She received all the elaborate funeral honors paid by ancient custom to the sovereigns of France. Her embalmed body lay in state in a room hung with black velvet and surrounded by Franciscan friars reciting prayers. In the antechamber hung with cloth of gold her plaster effigy was served at table morning and evening for forty days and the food afterward distributed to the poor. They could not take her to St. Denis to be buried under the stately monument she had built for her husband on which she had already placed her own statue. Her body rested for years forgotten in a church at Blois, till her husband's illegitimate daughter, Diana, dowager duchess of Montmorency, laid it

[1] B. N. It. 1737, Dec. 30, Jan. 6, 12; Neg. Tosc. IV, 852, 853, 854; Arch. Vat. 27.

alongside him to whom Catherine had given what was, perhaps, the one unselfish love of her life.

One month after her death the Archbishop of Bourges, the most eloquent pulpit orator of his day, preached the funeral sermon always delivered for every distinguished personage. He derives the origin of her family from a companion of the Gallic King Brennus who, in the third century before Christ, founded the city of Florence and took the name of Médicis because he had earlier made conquests in Media. He pronounces Catherine not only "the most noble queen in race and generation who ever reigned in France" but also "the most prudent in her administration, the gentlest in her conversation, the most affable and benignant to all who approached her, the most humble and loving towards her children, the most obedient to her husband, but above all the most devout toward God and the most sympathetic to the poor." At the close of his sermon he invited all to join him in this prayer: "Lord God, Father of mercy, who having by the death and resurrection of thy Son, our Savior Jesus, conquered death and sin, hast promised the resurrection of this mortal flesh and a happy and eternal life, open, good God, the fountains of thy grace on this pious soul who always hoped for that eternal life which Thou hast promised to thy well-beloved. She waits for thy goodness. She hopes in the merits of the passion of her Redeemer." [1]

[1] Letts. IX, 498.

NOTES

NOTES

VOLUME I

Pg. 84. Courteault's remark that the attack on Naples is "an invention of Protestant polemics," is refuted by Cal. Ven 2 April 1557: "Guise has authority to attack Naples or not according to his judgment." More fully by Romier II, iii.

Pg. 159. The story accepted by de Thou from Histoire, etc., that Catherine asked help from Philip who gave a promise of 40,000 men which was read in full council, is unmentioned by observers at court, unsupported by any documents and highly improbable in itself; considering Catherine's mood.

Pg. 177. The Venetian Ambassador, as well as his successor, wrote that the Guise planned to suppress heresy by force Rel. I (4) pp. 133 and 156. The Spanish Ambassador wrote: "Cardinal Lorraine told the Nuncio he would have so many troops at the opening of the Estates that he could shut any one's mouth," qtd. Mignet. Journal des Savants July 1857. Pasquier (Bk. IV Letter IX) says the Guise meant to exterminate the Protestants of France. De la Planches (F) account of their plans contains improbabilities but in this detail it is supported by the Roman Catholic Castelnau (Mem. Livre II Ch. XII).

Pg. 188. Altamira confirms this: "Dona Juana and Don Fernando called the Estates of Castile seven times. . . . But the decadence of their power makes itself felt in the tone, each time more respectful to the monarch, they use in their petitions." Historia de Espana II, 448. Bodin, de la Republique, Liv. I Ch. VIII, p. 138, Ed. Lyons, 1693.

Pg. 249. The so-called "Summary of things accorded between the Dukes of Montmorency and the Guise and the Marshal St. Andre" printed in Condé's Memoirs, Volume III, page 210, cannot be genuine. It is plainly a controversial pamphlet, purporting to give the plans of their adversaries, issued by the Bourbon-Junior Montmorency-Calvinist combination; henceforth to be spoken of as the Huguenot party. Similar instances of this kind on the Huguenot side are the supposed affidavits described in Letters, Volume I, page 246, the supposed letter of Guise printed Memoirs of Condé Volume III, page 509, and the so-called Memoirs of Jeanne d'Albret. On the Guise-orthodox side, one might cite the slanders so industriously circulated about the orgies in Calvinist worship, the forged letters of Calvin to du Poet encouraging pillage, and the public statement that the conspiracy of Amboise included the intention of murdering the King; which was against all the evidence the government had, both written and oral. A book like "Lenient, La Satire en France," makes perfectly evident that blackening the character of an opponent and misrepresenting his purposes was regarded as legitimate controversy. The practise was common in all countries in the sixteenth century. In England, Poles Apologia is an instance. For German examples on both sides of the Lutheran controversy, see Erganzungen zur Jasseus Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes.

Pg. 255. A veteran politician like Guise would not have written a note useless so far as his friends were concerned and alarming to his enemies, in order to introduce a messenger charged with verbal messages who was in danger of being captured. The date (June 25th) also betrays forgery. It would have been in Lorraine's hands the 26th. It must therefore have been captured before that. Yet Condé made on the 29th his promise to

leave the kingdom; which he never would have done had he seen this note. The messenger risked capture only the first part of his journey. If it was intercepted, where was it all that time? De la Noue, who was present at the Council of the Huguenot leaders, knows nothing of it. The argument of de Ruble (IV, 269, N) that it must be genuine because a copy is in the Record Office in London and it is printed in the Memoires Journaux de Guise, is not weighty. It would be apt to be in both places whether genuine or forged. The Huguenots gave it wide circulation.

Pg. 275. The hypothesis based on a mysterious document—omitting all names—a document whose original has been lost—that Catherine hired Poltrot to kill Guise and the letter of the Spanish Ambassador, credulous of any wild story against anyone not a zealot, that Marshal Montmorency bribed Poltrot by a promise of life to retract his confession implicating Coligny, have been entirely refuted by Whitehead; Coligny.

Pg. 285. Mr. Whitehead, in his Life of Coligny, in a very clear and able appendix on the Treaty of Hampton Court, has corrected a number of mistakes made by others who have discussed that document. He defends the Admiral against the charge of lack of patriotism in putting a pledge for Calais into the hands of England, by correctly pointing out that he had not seen the text of the Treaty of Hampton Court when he agreed to observe it. Able as Mr. Whitehead's discussion is, I do not feel that he has said the last word upon the subject. It is perfectly true that general directions had probably been given to the envoy, but it is also true that he had been given carte blanche. Coligny did not see the treaty when in general terms he agreed to keep it, but he did see it later without repudiating it, and Elizabeth had every right to believe that a treaty negotiated by an agent who had carte blanche, a treaty which had not been repudiated by the principals when it was seen, was in honor binding upon the men who had signed it in blank.

The Huguenot leaders when they sent their envoy to England, could hardly have been ignorant of the probability that Elizabeth would suggest such an article for the treaty, for, although she had not spoken directly to them about it, she had spoken very freely and publicly about it to the French Ambassador in England and to her own Ambassador to France, —so publicly that it was known and commented on in the Netherlands and in Spain that the English were holding Havre de Grace as a pawn for Calais. It is rather difficult to believe that the Admiral and the Prince, when the matter was so much talked about, remained entirely ignorant from the end of September to the end of February, of the fact that their agent had agreed to this demand. If they were officially ignorant of it, appearances strongly suggest that they must have taken some pains to remain so. At all events, they did not repudiate the treaty when they did not know its contents. The true explanation of this transaction, which involves too many mysteries to be quite straight, seems to be contained in a letter of Middlemore to Cecil of the 3rd of May, 1563.

"The Prince of Condé told me he understood by his representative in England that the Queen was become his enemy and would do him all the evil in the world. If she has," the writer says, "she has no great cause to be his friend, considering the promises he made her and how he now handles her. The Prince said he never made such a contract with her nor consented that Calais should be now rendered, nor that she should have Newhaven (Havre de Grace) until Calais was rendered. I replied that such as had his commission and express commands made it for him, because he would not be thereat and, in such cases, what is done by ministers is always avowed of the principals. 'But,' said he, 'if my ministers agree to putting anything in my blank contrary to my meaning, I am not bound to perform it.'

"The writer is told in great secret that at this present the Prince had written to persuade the Vidame of Chartres to deny that he was consenting to the article in the contract touching the Queen's keeping Newhaven

until Calais be rendered. This is the Queen Mother's (Catherine's) device and the Vidame is promised great things to do it. If he agrees to this foul act, the Prince has written to him to convey himself out of England hither. And being here, he shall make open protestation and send it to the Queen, that he never knew of it nor was consenting to it. And if he will not do it, the Prince has written to him that he will utterly deny it and charge him wholly with all, whereby he shall lose his living and country and be esteemed a traitor all his life after; whereas, if he will do this to content the Queen Mother, there never was a man that should be made more of. This is so secretly practiced that only two know it besides the Prince. He that discovered this matter to the writer is a great friend to the Vidame but a traitor to the Queen. It would serve the Queen (Elizabeth) that a declaration were sent forth in print together with the contract between her and the Prince for her justification, but so as it might not prove prejudicial to the Admiral, who must show himself her friend (whereof the writer sees little likelihood) but, until the Admiral is thoroughly decided, a declaration cannot be made."

Pg. 305. The fact that Diana took this monogram, turning the two Cs into two Ds and used it on her book bindings, does not alter the fact that it was the official monogram of the King and Queen. Catherine used it after her husband's death.

Pg. 335. The French translation of de Thou from which citations are usually made, has here a paragraph expressing doubt of the authenticity of this harangue. This paragraph is not only wanting in the Latin original from which this translation is made but de Thou cites in the original an authority "which had removed all his doubts." The only conclusion seems to be that the paragraph of the French translation of de Thou expressing doubt about the authenticity of the harangue is the interpolation of a translator more pious than scrupulous.

Pg. 389. Printed Histoire de Nostre Temps. This volume is described by its prologue (dated Aug., 1570) as a collection of documents on which the author intends to base a history of the civil wars. The prologue blames all the miseries of France upon the Cardinal of Lorraine. It contains at least one other demonstrably unreliable document: the so-called Memoires of Jeanne d'Albret.

VOLUME II

Pg. 38. The conversation of Cardinal Pelleve with the special papal Envoy Bramante, that the King intended to show favor to some Huguenots who were intimate with the Admiral and other leaders of the sect in order to win them to his side and then by money and other gifts cause them to kill the Admiral and the other heads of the party, ought to be dismissed as the idle suspicion of one of the least trusted men at the French court. If Catherine had formed so rash and complicated a scheme, she never would have talked about it to the Cardinal Pelleve. Arch. Vat. 8 Nov., 1570, Bramante to Pope.

Pg. 40. I cannot feel that "Les Poesies inédites de Catherine de Médicis published by Mr. Edouard Fremy are genuine. I hope her literary taste was better than they indicate. I am glad to find myself sustained by the authority of M. le Comte Baguenault de Puchesse. Rev. Qts. Hists., 1883.

Pg. 55. The story afterwards printed by Goulart that Lignerolles was assassinated because, having learned from Anjou of a plot for the general massacre of the Huguenots, he was foolish enough to let the King know he had this secret, was discredited, as de Thou reports, by several Huguenots who were at Court at the time. It may be dismissed as a later invention not only because of this testimony but because, if we know anything at all about the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, we know that no plot for it had been formed when Lignerolles was killed. (Estat de la France I 62, de Thou IV 492.)

Pg. 61. This document is without date but Villars was made Marshal

March, 1571. Vielleville died in December and Alava reached Spain December 13. Therefore it must have been written about the end of 1571.

Pg. 68. The dispatches in Neg. Tosc show that Whitehead, who follows Hauser "De la Noue," p. 25, is mistaken in supposing that the Duke of Tuscany urged immediate war. De la Noue urged the Huguenots to give up this plan and, in spite of the denial of La Popelinière, his assertion that he spoke for the Admiral is probable and ought to be accepted. Hauser 27.

Pg. 87. Corbinelli, a Florentine, afterwards reader to Anjou, Cavriana (a Tuscan physician), Cavalli and Michiele (Venetian Ambassadors), Margaret, de Thou (who had his father's Journal) and Tavannes. Tavannes' Memoires must be used with great caution. They were written long afterwards chiefly by his son, with an apologetic purpose. The so-called "Confession of the Duke of Anjou" supposedly made to Miron is plainly a forgery. It has no external evidence to support it and the internal evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming. The real and very different statement of Anjou was printed at Cracow under the title, Vera et brevis Descriptio, etc. It is reprinted Bull. Soc. Prot. 56 p. 499. Henri Monod, La Saint Barthélemy, Version du Duc d'Anjou.

Pg. 91. Dispatch of Ferrarese Ambassador, Aug. 24, 1572, "at this moment, in front of the King's rooms there are to be seen at least a dozen Huguenot leaders, dead or in the death agony."

Pg. 109. The idea suggested by several historians that one of the chief causes of the St. Bartholomew massacre was the cowardly reluctance of Elizabeth to join France in open war on Spain, is disproved by the diplomatic correspondence. When the massacre took place England was engaged in making against Spain the same sort of unacknowledged war which France had been making a few weeks before. English volunteers, to the number of about two thousand, were on the Island of Zealand with Flushing as their center of operation. La Mothe V 78. The Duke of Alva had done his best to keep Elizabeth from allowing them to go, while pretending to accept her excuses that she could not prevent it anyway. She told his envoy that when she had enough men in Flushing she might hand it over to the Duke of Alva. It is doubtful whether Alva took this offer seriously, though a modern historian (Mr. Froude) has. Certainly nothing but that writer's intense prejudice against Elizabeth could have induced him to overlook the fact that the English Ambassador, writing to his friends on the council that they should urge Elizabeth to join France in open war against Spain, was not expressing any official offer, but only his own opinions and wishes and those of the Huguenots. Charles never offered such an alliance for open war against Spain. On the contrary he wrote on the 9th of August, after the great council which had rejected the idea of war with Spain, that he would not make war in Flanders, but that his ambassador should urge Elizabeth to do so. La Mothe VII 311-319. Elizabeth, tricky herself, declined to distrust Philip any more than she distrusted Catherine and events seem to have proved that she was right.

Pg. 117. Rel I 4 p. 294, Rel I 4 p. 328.

The letter of Catherine written two months before and marked "not to be opened until August 24th," directing the Massacre of the Huguenots of La Rochelle is manifestly a forgery. (Arch C. VII 200.)

De Serres, de la Popelinière, de Thou IV 635, d'Aubigne (Protestants). Adrian, Catena, Gabrizio, Boulenger, Davila (Catholics).

Perefixe, Bussière, Dondini.

Claude Haton, Monluc. Brantôme reports both opinions. Margaret of Valois, Chiverny, Tavannes, Turenne. This list of writers is based on Wüttke, but some of his judgments, sometimes exactly opposite to the sense of the passage quoted to sustain them, are corrected. For a review of 19th century literature see Philippson, Zeitalter, etc. 255.

Spanish, Florentine, Venetian Ambassadors, The Nuncio, Cavriana, Cavalli.

Pg. 131. The often repeated mistake that Elizabeth, in private conversation, called Catherine Madame Serpente, comes from a misreading of the correspondence of Maisonfleur who carried the Duke's letter. Names were marked by cipher. Maisonfleur called Alenson, Lucidor; Elizabeth, Madame de Lisle and Catherine, Madame Serpente.

Pg. 136. It is difficult to understand why so many French writers (e.g. de la Charrière, Neg. Lev. Preface and de la Ferrière) have seen in this election a triumph of statecraft. It was as Waddington observes "une aventure lamentable."

Pg. 164. This story comes to us so straight that it is hard to doubt it. But the recollections of Henry IV and d'Aubigné have a dramatic quality which insensibly arouses in their reader the suspicion that they lose nothing in the telling.

Pg. 211. This document seems to me so plainly unauthentic that it appears remarkable that it should have been taken seriously by de Thou and only half-heartedly questioned by most modern historians. Why should the Duke of Guise have been guilty of the madness of putting such compromising matter in writing? If he did so, why should he send it on a dangerous journey across France in the hands of a man as unsafe as David? If David got to Rome with it and delivered it to the Pope, why should he bring it back again to France? The style of the document is not at all the style of a veritable sketch of operations for the approval of the Pope. It is precisely the style calculated to make ready for the exhortation which the publishers printed at the end—for all good Frenchmen to defend the King against this danger. Nobody has ever seen the original, or even a MSS. copy of the original. The Vicomte d'Ars is in error on page 75 in supporting by the authority of de Thou the statement that the copy of Guise's Memoirs of David, which the French Ambassador at Madrid sent to the King of France, had come from Rome. And Robiquet, whose book appeared two years later, apparently follows him in saying on page 61 of "Paris et Le Ligue," that the Ambassador sent the King a copy "after the original which Philip II had received from Rome." There is nothing in the passage of de Thou to suggest that the document which the Spanish Ambassador saw at Madrid came from Rome—nothing to show even that it was a manuscript and not a printed book of which he sent "an example to the King, who had seen it already." "Verum postea, iisdem in Hispaniam missis ut cum Philippo communicarentur, J. Vironius Sanjoartius. . . . exemplum eorum nactus statim ad regem preferendum curavit; ut mihi ipse narravit." De Thou says it fell into the hands of the Protestants "by what accident I do not know" who published it. There is not the slightest external evidence for its authenticity and all the internal evidence suggests that it was one of the pseudographs so common in the controversies of the times.

Pg. 264. The judgment of the Editor in the preface of Vol. VII of Catherine's correspondence rejects this suspicion as without any proof worthy of consideration. The case is even more favorable to the accused than he describes it. He mentions four historians as accusers of Catherine, Brantôme, Davila, Le Laboureur and Girard. Of these Le Laboureur only quotes without comment Brantôme, who says merely that he died of poison. Davila, Bk. VI, Vol. III, 1st pt. p. 133, does not even say that Bellegarde died of poison, but only "ma qual se fosse la cagione, il maresciallo appena ritornato a Saluzzo passo improvisamente de questa vita." Girard I 38, simply says of his death "ce ne fut pas sans soupçon de poison."

Pg. 356. Riess, Politik Paul's IV 293. Letts. IX 199. Documents concerning this long lawsuit are scattered through several archives. During my visits I have not been able to take time from more important investigations to master their details. Nor am I certain that if I had had the time, I should have had the patience.

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Fds. Fr. Fonds Français.
It. Italien. Transcripts of despatches of Ven. Ambs. in the Archives at Venice.
Nouvs. Acqs. Nouvelles Acquisitions.
Port. Font. Portefeuilles de Fontanieu.
Arch. Flor. or Arch. Med. Archivio di Stato. Florence.
Arch. G. Archives at Genoa.
Arch. M. Archives at Mantua.
Arch. Mod. Archives at Modena.
Arch. Nap. or C.F. Archives at Naples, Carte Farnesiane.
Arch. Vat. Archives of the Vatican.
Archives at
Basle. Arch. Basle.
Berne. Arch. Berne.
Lucerne. Arch. Lucerne.
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